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THE HISTORY OF WOMEN,

FROM THE

EARLIEST ANTIQUITY, TO THE PRESENT TIME;

GIVING

Some Account of almoſt every intereſting Particular concerning that Sex, among all Nations, ancient and modern.

By WILLIAM ALEXANDER, M.D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE HISTORY OF WOMEN

OF

ALL NATIONS

ADVERTISEMENT.

AS the following Work was compoſed ſolely for the amuſement and inſtruction of the Fair Sex; and as their education is in general leſs extenſive than that of the men; in order to render it the more intelligible, we have ſtudied the utmoſt plainneſs and ſimplicity of language; have not only totally excluded almoſt every word that is not Engliſh, but even, as much as poſſible, avoided every technical term.

As we perſuade ourſelves, that nothing could be more perplexing to the ſex, or to which they would pay leſs attention, than a long liſt of authors on the margin, to ſhew from whence we have derived our information, and as a great part of ſuch liſt would refer to books in other languages, we have entirely omitted it, and contented ourſelves with ſometimes interweaving into our text, the names and ſentiments of ſuch authors as have more peculiarly elucidated the ſubjects we were inveſtigating.

ADVERTISEMENT.

We have not vanity enough to recommend our Work to the learned, they muſt have met with every anecdote related in it; but as the generality of the fair ſex, whoſe reading is more confined, now ſpend many of their idle hours in poring over novels and romances, which greatly tend to miſlead the underſtanding and corrupt the heart, we cannot help expreſſing a wiſh, that they would ſpare a part of this time to look into the hiſtory of their own Sex; a hiſtory, which we flatter ourſelves will afford them no irrational amuſement, and which will more gratify the curioſity of the female mind in whatever relates to themſelves, than any thing that has hitherto been publiſhed.

We do not mean by this to praiſe ourſelves; we ſubmit with the utmoſt diffidence to the judgment of the Public. If we have any merit, it is only in collecting together, and preſenting in one view, a variety of anecdotes concerning the ſex, which lay ſcattered in a great number of authors, ancient and modern, and not within the reading of the Sex themſelves; recourſe to larger libraries might have made theſe anecdotes more numerous, and better judgments would have ſelected them more judiciouſly; on theſe accounts, none can be more ſenſible of the imperfections of the Work than we

are, but we hope our candid Readers will make ſome allowances for our having trod a path which has never been attempted before; and the Ladies, we flatter ourſelves, will treat us with ſome indulgence, when we aſſure them, that we have exerted our utmoſt abilities to put their hiſtory into the moſt engaging dreſs, and to mingle pleaſure with inſtruction.

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INTRO-

INTRODUCTION.

ALTHOUGH there is nothing in nature that ſo much engages our attention, ſo forcibly draws our inclinations, or with which our intereſts are ſo intimately blended, as with the other ſex, yet ſo ſtrong is our partiality to ourſelves, that we have never in any period, nor in any country, ſufficiently attended to the happineſs and intereſts of thoſe beings, whom in every period, and in every country, we have profeſſed to love and to adore: and while the charms which they poſſeſs, have every where extorted from us the tribute of love, they have only in a few places extorted from us good uſage.

Complaints againſt the ſex.

ALMOST every man is full of complaints againſt the ſex, but hardly do we meet with any one who ſeriouſly endeavours to rectify the evils againſt which he exclaims ſo bitterly. He who conſiders women only as objects of his love, and of his pleaſure; complains, that in his connections with them, he finds them inconſtant, unfaithful, and ever open to flattery and ſeduction. The philoſopher, who would wiſh to mingle the joys of friendſhip and of converſation with thoſe of love, complains that they are deſtitute of every idea, but thoſe that flow from gallantry and ſelf-admiration; and conſequently incapable of giving or receiv-

ing any of the more refined and intellectual pleaſures. The man of buſineſs complains, that they are giddy and thoughtleſs, and want the plodding head, and the ſaving hand, ſo neceſſary towards thriving in the world. And almoſt every man complains, of their idleneſs, extravagance, diſregard to every kind of admonition, and neglect of the duties of domeſtic and ſocial life.

Cauſes of theſe complaints.

WITHOUT examining how far theſe general complaints are well or ill founded, we ſhall only obſerve, that in caſes where they are well founded, when we trace them to their ſource, we find the blame ultimately fall on ourſelves. Does not the man of love and gallantry commonly ſet the example of infidelity and inconſtancy to the females with whom he is connected? And do not men in general, but too obviouſly, chalk out to the other ſex, the way that leads to every levity and folly? What made the philoſopher ſo ſuſceptible of the rational and the intellectual pleaſures? doubtleſs, the education beſtowed upon him; and the ſame education might have given his wife or his daughter, an equal, or even a ſuperior reliſh for them; it is folly in him therefore to expect the fruit without the culture neceſſary to bring it to perfection. The plodding and ſteadineſs of the man of buſineſs, he has acquired in his early years; and they are augmented by his being ſole maſter of what he can amaſs, and having a power to ſpend or diſpoſe of it as he thinks proper. But his wife was brought up in no ſuch ſchool, and has no ſuch motives to induſtry; for ſhould ſhe even toil with the utmoſt aſſiduity, ſhe cannot appropriate to herſelf what ſhe acquires; nor lay out any part of it without leave of her huſband. Nor is the idleneſs, extravagance, and neglect of domeſtic duties, which we ſo commonly charge upon the ſex, ſo much the fault of nature as of education. Can

we expect that the girl whom we train up in every faſhionable levity and folly, whom we uſe our utmoſt efforts to flatter and to amuſe, ſhall, the moment of her marriage, totally change her plan, and become the ſober and œconomical houſewife? as well might we ſow weeds and expect to reap corn.

If this be, as we perſuade ourſelves it is, a candid and impartial ſtate of the ſource of female folly and of female weakneſs; if the whole may be traced either to the total want of, or to an improper education; and if the power of neglecting this education altogether, or beſtowing it improperly, be lodged in our hands, as having the ſole management and direction of the ſex; then it will follow, that we ſhould act a much better and more becoming part, in trying to amend their faults by a more judicious inſtruction, than to leave them ignorant, and complain that they are ſo; or teach them folly, and rail at them for having learned what we taught them. But inſtead of doing this, in every age, and in every country, while the men have been partial to the perſons of the fair, they have either left their minds altogether without culture, or biaſſed them by a culture of a ſpurious and improper nature; ſuſpicious, perhaps, that a more rational one would have opened their eyes, ſhewn them their real condition, and prompted them to aſſert the rights of nature; rights, of which the men have perpetually, more or leſs, deprived them.

But we do not only neglect the ſex, or miſlead them in point of education; while youth and beauty is on their ſide, the ſcene which we open to them is all deluſion, flattery, and falſehood; for while we take every opportunity of telling them when preſent, that their perſons are all beauty, and their ſentiments and

actions all perfection; when abſent, we laugh at the credulity of their minds, and ſplenetically ſatiriſe and exhibit to view every fault and every folly. Nor is it till they have become wives, or till the wrinkles have furrowed their brows, that the other ſex hear the voice of truth from ours.

Satiriſts, how they have treated the ſex.

Nor are the follies and foibles of the ſex, only the ſubject of verbal ſneer, and of verbal criticiſm; ſuch of our ſex as have been ſoured by diſappointments of any kind, and more particularly thoſe who have been unfortunate in the purſuit of lawful, and ſtill more ſo, in that of unlawful love; like cowards who attack every one who, they are aſſured, will make no reſiſtance, have in all ages dipped their pens in gall, and for the ſuppoſed faults of a few, illiberally vomited out ſpleen and ill-nature againſt the whole ſex. Among the earlieſt of theſe kind of writers we may juſtly reckon Solomon, who ſated with licentious love, cloyed with venal charms, and perhaps ſhattered in conſtitution, took almoſt every opportunity to exclaim againſt the ſlaves of his ſeraglio, and the whole ſex; becauſe they could afford him no new pleaſure, and becauſe they were not equal in mental qualifications to the men; a thing which Solomon might eaſily have found to be impoſſible, had he attended to the method in which they were educated, and in which they were confined. Some alſo of the Apocryphal writers are nothing behind Solomon in ſpleen, and greatly exceed him in ill-nature and coarſeneſs of expreſſion. But it ſeems to have been the genius of the Eaſt to praiſe all women for their perſonal graces, and at the ſame time to ſuppoſe them entirely diveſted of every good quality of the mind; for we find the ſame ideas which were entertained by Solomon, diffuſed among the Hindoos even in an earlier period of the world, and venting themſelves

ſelves alſo in their ſacred writings even with an additional degree of acrimony. "The luſt of a woman (ſays the Pundits) is never "ſatisfied, no more than fire is ſatisfied with fuel, or the main "ocean with receiving the rivers, or the empire of death with "the dying of men and animals." And again, "Women have "ſix qualities: the firſt, an inordinate deſire for jewels and fine "furniture, handſome clothes, and nice victuals; the ſecond, "immoderate luſt; the third, violent anger; the fourth, deep "reſentment, no perſon knowing the ſentiments concealed in "their heart; the fifth, another perſon's good appears evil in "their eyes; the ſixth, they commit bad actions." With ſuch invectives of the eaſterns we could fill a whole volume; but we have only ſelected theſe, to ſhew that their opinions were not ſupported by any argument, nor tinctured with any wit; and that on theſe accounts we may ſuppoſe them only mere effuſions of the ſpleen. Nor were the Greek and Roman writers more refined in their ſentiments, or delicate in their expreſſions. The language uſed by ſome of the Greek writers, as well as by Juvenal, Martial, and Horace, is too coarſe and unpoliſhed for a people juſt emerged from barbarity, and conveys to us a mean idea of Greek and Roman politeneſs.

Favourable turn in the condition of the ſex.

AFTER women had been the ſubject of ſatirical wit and of ſplenetic temper for upwards of three thouſand years, an inſtitution at laſt aroſe in Europe, known by the name of chivalry, which for ſome time totally changed the ſentiments and writings of mankind, and placing the ſex hardly beneath celeſtial beings, made it ſomething more than treaſon to maltreat, and ſcarcely leſs than blaſphemy to ſpeak evil of them. The times, however, in which chivalry flouriſhed in its greateſt perfection, were not thoſe

thoſe of writing; but when it began to decline, and letters to mix with gallantry, the effuſions of wit took another direction, and the men, inſtead of ſtriving againſt each other who ſhould moſt vilify the ſex, entered the liſts with another intention, that of ſhewing their ſuperior merit, and even of perſuading the world, that of all the joys we can experience in the preſent, or hope for in the life to come, love is the only one worth our care and ſolicitude.

ANCIENTLY the bards had only been employed to ſing the exploits of heroes, or of the rich who entertained them in their train. In the decline of chivalry, they began alſo to ſing the praiſes of beauty, and the ſweets of love. In the praiſe of beauty they were to the laſt degree extravagant and hyperbolical: not ſatisfied with comparing their miſtreſſes, as in modern times, to angels and other inferior celeſtial beings; they were not aſhamed to compare them to, and even to exalt them above the Supreme Being himſelf. In celebrating the enjoyments of love, they were not leſs wild and romantic, and imagined that even paradiſe without it would be joyleſs and inſipid. Boccace, in the moſt ſerious manner, claſſed together God and the ladies, and thanked them for their mutual aſſiſtance in defending him againſt his enemies; and Petrarch no leſs ſeriouſly compares Laura, his miſtreſs, to Jeſus Chriſt. Deudes de Prade, a prieſt and poet, who uſed to ſing the praiſes of women, ſays, that he would not wiſh to enter into heaven, but on condition of making love to her whom he adored.

To praiſe the ſex became faſhionable.

WE are not much ſurpriſed to find the poets, or troubadours, who were retained by the rich and the beautiful, and paid for their ſongs, flattering greatneſs and extolling beauty. But they were

were not the only ſet of men who thus employed themſelves: the humour became general; poets, prieſts, gentlemen, all dedicated their literary talents to the praiſe of women; and it became at laſt unneceſſary for them to hire poets, when all ranks of people voluntarily inliſted themſelves in their ſervice.

Boccace ſeems to have been the firſt who ſtarted the idea of writing any thing larger than a ſong or ſonnet in praiſe of the ſex. He publiſhed a Latin treatiſe, intitled "Of illuſtrious "Women;" and in ſearch of them he ranſacked the whole circuit of fable, of the ſacred, and of the Greek and Roman hiſtories. The idea was too happily adapted to the taſte of the times, to be allowed to ſink into oblivion; it was ſoon, therefore, taken up by a numerous herd of imitators. Francis Sordonati improving upon it, collected from every poliſhed and from every barbarous nation to the number of one hundred and twenty, the names of ſuch as had eſcaped Boccace. This mode of writing now became faſhionable, in a few years not leſs than twenty authors had publiſhed in praiſe of women. The heroine, the religioſa, and the learned ſtood foremoſt in the catalogue. But the inferior virtues did not paſs unnoticed; and at laſt, even the making of an excellent pudding, and every other ſpecies of culinary merit, came to be the ſubject of panegyric: and in ſpite of all their natural phlegm, even the Dutch felt the enthuſiaſm, and contributed their mite to the praiſe of the ſex.

Subjects of writing upon, like modes of dreſs, have their turns of being faſhionable: this was the period in which the faſhionable topic was to extol all the virtues, and to varniſh over all the vices of women. Much had already been ſaid and wrote on the

the ſubject: but Hilario da Coſta, a monk, reſolving to exceed all who had gone before him, publiſhed two quarto volumes, of eight hundred pages each; containing, according to his account, the panegyrics of all the women of the fifteenth and ſixteenth centuries, who had diſtinguiſhed themſelves by any remarkable talents or virtues. But as if no talent nor any virtue could exiſt without the pale of the catholic church, the partial eccleſiaſtic paſſes in ſilence over every woman of other principles; and while he loudly praiſes the virtues of Mary queen of England, whoſe memory ſucceeding ages have held in contempt; of her ſiſter Elizabeth, whom her country ſtill remembers with gratitude, he makes no mention. The eulogies of this monk amount to one hundred and ſeventy. But who can enſure to himſelf, in this deluſory world, the ſummit of greatneſs or of fame? The voluminous labours of our monk were ſoon after greatly ſurpaſſed by Paul de Ribera, who was delivered of a monſtrous work, which he called "The Triumphs and heroic Enterprizes of eight hun-" dred Women."

On reading theſe accounts a reflection naturally ariſes, that either the women of theſe times muſt have been very remarkable for their virtues and good qualities, or the men muſt have baſely proſtituted their talents to adulation and flattery. The truth ſeems to be, that both were in ſome meaſure the caſe: the ſubject, as we have juſt now remarked, was faſhionable, and it intitled the writer to the ſmiles and approbation of the fair; and their ſmiles and approbation, beſides flattering his vanity, were the road to honour and to preferment. Nor was the ſpirit of chivalry as yet ſo far evaporated, as to leave the men at liberty to conſider the ſex in a calm and diſpaſſionate light, or to write any thing concerning them

them that did not ſet them ſomething above the level of mortality. The women too, emulous of glory and of praiſe, were, by theſe writings, ſtimulated to great and to virtuous actions; they inſpired the men to aſcribe to them noble deeds and ſentiments, and they acted and thought nobly, that they might not falſify the opinions entertained of them; hence theſe times produced more extraordinary women, than have ever at any other period appeared in Europe.

The ſentiments of the men take an oppoſite direction.

When this kind of gallantry, which taught every man to conſider every woman as a kind of ſuperior being, had wore itſelf out by the moſt extravagant exertions, the minds of men took an oppoſite direction, and began to conſider the ſex, either in a diminutive, or contumelious light; looking upon them, either as the play-things of a ſportive hour, or the mere inſtruments of animal pleaſure; diveſting them of almoſt all ſentiment, and avoiding almoſt all ſerious connection with them. In England, the libertiniſm of the court of Charles the Second firſt debauched the morals of almoſt all the women, and then taught the men to deſpiſe them for the want of what they themſelves had robbed them of. Things having taken this turn, it ſoon became as faſhionable to write againſt the women, as it had been before to write in their favour. The earl of Rocheſter ſet the example, and it was ſoon followed by Pope, Swift, Young, and a variety of other inferior ſcriblers; all of whom aſſert, that their intention was thereby to reclaim a ſex, which, in the proſecution of vice and folly, had reſiſted every other effort. But if ſuch really was their intention, which there are ſome reaſons to doubt; the event has ſhewn how ill it was adapted to the purpoſes intended; the praiſes beſtowed on women in former times, fired them with a great and a virtuous

emulation; the ſatire thrown out againſt them by the writers we have mentioned, has only incited their indignation, inſtead of amending their heart.

SUCH have been the modes of writing concerning the ſex, and ſuch have been the effects of theſe writings. Let us now take a ſhort view of the revolutions which have happened to their character and manners in Europe, from the deſtruction of the Roman empire to the preſent time.

WHEN the ancient Germans ſallied from their woods and caverns, to give laws and cuſtoms to all Europe, their women, as we ſhall ſee afterward, were, in many reſpects, of equal, and ſometimes even of greater, conſideration and conſequence than their men. When theſe Germans had ſettled themſelves in almoſt every country, and when, from that mixture of religion, gallantry, and war, for which they were conſpicuous, had ariſen that ſpecies of romantic heroiſm, called chivalry, we have the ſtrongeſt reaſon to believe, that the value which it ſtamped on their women, communicated to them a dignity and pride, which contributed to render them as virtuous as perhaps the women of any country or period have ever been.

Cauſes of this change of ſentiment.

BUT when chivalry began to degenerate, and when knighthood, the chief of its honours, inſtead of being eagerly courted, and only attained by a long ſeries of valorous and meritorious actions, came to be annexed to the poſſeſſion of a certain quantity of land; proſtituted to every one who deſired, and even to ſerve the purpoſes of the great; forcibly obtruded on thoſe who ſedulouſly avoided it; the public honour of the men began to decline, their behaviour to the women became leſs reſpectful; the

women

women loſt much of their dignity, and with it no ſmall ſhare of their virtue. The hiſtory of all the European nations now exhibited a picture the moſt ſadly reverſed from what it was before; the men had loſt all their deference for the ſex, and the women had loſt all the chaſtity that inſpired it; the coarſeſt familiarity of manners, and the moſt ſcandalous profligacy of character in both ſexes enſued.

In France, inſtead of approaching the women with that reſpectful deference, to which they had been accuſtomed, and which is a tribute due to modeſty, it now became faſhionable for the men to intrude themſelves upon them every where, with the moſt indecent familiarity. The ſex might eaſily have diſcouraged this, but they rather gave it countenance; and the conſequence was, that all ſexual decorum being nearly extinguiſhed, the familiarity allowed to the men, in time, began to be productive of contempt; and the groſſeſt debauchery ſucceeded the moſt ſentimental love. Even the name of delicacy was almoſt loſt. Women of all ranks and conditions admitted their male viſitors with the ſame indifference, while in bed in their chamber, as to the ſide of their parlour fire; councils of ſtate were frequently held in the bed-chambers of ladies while in bed, who often determined by their voice, but more commonly by promiſes of ſecret favours, the reſolutions that were taken.

Nor were the manners of the Engliſh ladies much more reſerved, or their characters more ſacred than thoſe of the French. The ſame indecent familiarity marked their public, and the ſame licentiouſneſs, their private, behaviour: during the Chriſtmas holidays, almoſt every nobleman entertained his vaſſals of both

ſexes, a neighbouring clergyman was generally choſen by him, to preſide over this riotous mirth and indecent feſtivity, who, from the nature of his office, was commonly called by the name of the Abbot of Miſrule. In the houſes of the great, were generally apartments deſtined for the women, who were employed in embroidery, and other kinds of needle-work; and the name given to theſe apartments, in conſequence of the uſe that was made of them, came in time to be ſynonymous to that of a brothel. Nay, ſo loſt to public decency were all ranks of men, that even the clergy were not aſhamed to have inſcriptions over the doors of theſe apartments, ſignifying the uſe to which they were appropriated *. Nor did gentlemen of conſiderable property bluſh, to hold lands by, and bear commiſſions, for being marſhal of the king's whores.

Female delicacy begins to revive.

SOME time previous to the reign of queen Elizabeth, the delicacy and decency of the female character had begun to revive: from her time, to that of the Protector, their manners were ſtill refining; but during his adminiſtration, ſanctimoniouſly enthuſiaſtic, devotion ſtruggled hard to exclude nature, and ſlovenlineſs and ſuperſtition to ſubſtitute themſelves for religion. The Reſtoration turned again the channel of their manners, and gave it a direction only to pleaſure and licentious love; the diſtractions, during the reign of James II., abated a little that fervour for pleaſure; and the ſettled ſituation of affairs that took place under William III., together with the diſapprobation ſhewn by the court to unlawful gallantry, gave to the female character that turn towards the decency and politeneſs of manners, in which it

* The celebrated Cardinal Wolſey, over a door of a particular part of his palace, had theſe words in Latin: "The houſe of the whores of my lord the Cardinal."

has

has now made ſo conſiderable a progreſs. We cannot help taking notice here, that if we may credit the declaimer, the ſatiriſt, and the preacher, the female virtues are at preſent on the decline. For our parts, we pretend not to decide on ſo delicate a point; and only expreſs our hopes, that the conduct of our fair country-women will in this particular contribute to give the lie to the ſatiriſt, the declaimer, and even to the preacher himſelf.

Of the eaſtern women.

WHILE the manners and the character of the European women have been held out in ſuch a variety of different lights; while they have been liable to ſo many mutations, from the changes of faſhion, of government, and religion; the women of the Eaſt have exhibited always the ſame appearance: their manners, cuſtoms, and faſhions, like their rocks, have ſtood unaltered the teſt of many revolving ages; and though the kingdoms of which they are a part, have often changed maſters, and yielded to the victorious arms of a conqueror; yet the laws by which they are governed and enſlaved, have never been reviſed nor amended.

SUCH being the caſe, in taking an introductory view of the eaſtern women, we are, like the man, who, from an eminence ſurveying the ſurface of a placid ocean, looks out in vain for variety or diverſity. The Hindoo women, who inhabit the greateſt part of the Eaſt Indies, have been time immemorial almoſt in every reſpect the ſame as at preſent: and even the religion of Mahomet, which gave to the women who profeſſed it, no leſs an advantage over the diſciples of Brama, than an exemption from burning on the funeral piles of their deceaſed huſbands, could never induce one ſingle Hindoo to become Mahomedan, nor ever made the ſmalleſt change in their condition, or in the leaſt altered their cuſ-

toms.

toms. This exemption, however, was the only advantage introduced by the religion of Mahomet among the women of the Eaſt. It abated not the rigour of their confinement, nor conferred upon them any more conſequence.

As Aſia was formerly the ſeat of learning, and is now that of ignorance, we are better acquainted with the ideas which the Aſiatics entertained of their women many years ago, than we are at preſent; and have already ſeen, that theſe ideas, beſides their being unfavourable, were often expreſſed in the moſt coarſe and indelicate manner. Had the manners and cuſtoms of their women been ſubject to the ſame changes as they are in Europe, we might have expected the ſame changes in the ſentiments and writings of their men: but as this is not the caſe, we have reaſon to preſume, that the ſame ſentiments entertained by Solomon, by ſome of the apocryphal writers, and by the ancient Pundits *, are the ſentiments of this day: and in this opinion we are the more confirmed, when we conſider, that, in the treatment of the ſex, no alteration for the better has ever yet taken place; which muſt undoubtedly have been the caſe, had the ſentiments of the men concerning them been more favourable.

But while ſuch are the ſentiments of the Aſiatics, while ſuch is the manner in which they treat their women, their tongues, in the utmoſt diſſonance to theſe ſentiments, conſtantly utter a language to which their hearts are entirely ſtrangers, and the whole of their actions flatly contradict their words: while, in the abſence of the ſex, they ſeem to deſpiſe and treat them with contempt; in their preſence, when inſtigated by animal love, they not only

* Pundits are the Braminical expoſitors of the laws of the Hindoos.

pay them the greateſt deference, but even accoſt them as ſomething more than mortal: when the love fit is over, though their tongues may ſtill retain the ſame language, they will, amid all this abuſe and proſtitution of words, chaſtiſe with ſeverity for the ſlighteſt offence, her whom they ſeemed to adore; will, without any offence whatever, keep her ſhut up from ſociety, and almoſt from the light of heaven, a perpetual priſoner; and, if jealouſy ſhould ariſe in their breaſts, conſign her to expire amid the moſt cruel tortures, while themſelves glory and exult in her ſufferings.

SUCH, with little alteration, has been, from the remoteſt antiquity, the condition of the weaker ſex, over the greater part of Aſia and Africa; and ſuch it will probably continue, as long as the men continue the ſlaves of a deſpot, and perhaps the ſtill greater ſlaves of ignorance and barbarity.

Of the American women.

WHEN Veſpucius diſcovered America, he opened a field for the ambition of the ſtateſman, the avarice of the trader, and the contemplation of the philoſopher. He found that vaſt continent peopled by a race, or rather divers races of mortals, ſcarcely leſs diſtinct in their perſons, than in their manners and cuſtoms, from theſe of the Old World; and when compared to them, only mere children in all the arts which render life comfortable, and diſtinguiſh man from the beaſts of the field. Such were both ſexes: the women were but little diſtinguiſhed from the men by their dreſs, where any dreſs was made uſe of; nor were they much inferior to them in bodily ſtrength, and hardly leſs patient of cold, hunger, thirſt, or leſs qualified to hunt and to fiſh for their ſubſiſtence.

ſiſtence. But notwithſtanding of this natural equality, the men had completely enſlaved them, and thrown upon their ſhoulders all that could be called labour, either in the houſe or in the field, while they themſelves were above undertaking any thing but the ſports of the chace, or the depredations of war. Thus oppreſſed and diſheartened, the fair ſex were entire ſtrangers to the friendſhip of the men, and not much the object of their love. They paſſed through life almoſt without taſting any of its pleaſures, and could hardly be ſaid to enjoy one privilege beſide perſonal liberty.

BUT this was not the caſe in every part of America. Among ſome tribes the women enjoyed almoſt the whole, and among others a great ſhare of the legiſlative authority. The condition of the ſex was not, however, properly adjuſted to any medium: they were every where either exalted to a degree far beyond the dictates of good policy, and veſted with powers and privileges of the moſt exorbitant nature, or ſunk to a level with the beaſts, and depreſſed by the moſt abject ſlavery.

SUCH was the ſtate in which they were found by the firſt diſcoverers of America; a ſtate, from which it was natural to ſuppoſe they would ſoon have been reſcued by European politeneſs and humanity: but the caſe was far otherwiſe; our ſordid love of their gold overcame our politeneſs, baniſhed humanity from our breaſts; and inſtead of aboliſhing the ſlavery of the women, made us with a more than ſavage barbarity, wherever our power could reach, extend it to the men alſo.

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In the condition we have now deſcribed had the women of America, in all probability, been for time immemorial: but as they had not the art of writing, and conſequently no hiſtorical records, we know not whether their ſtates ever ſuffered any revolution, or whether they ever altered or improved their manners and cuſtoms. It is pretended, indeed, that the Mexicans had a kind of hiſtorical records, compoſed of what they called Quipos, or Chords, ſo knotted and twiſted, as to be able to relate the whole ſeries of paſt events, with the ſame clearneſs and preciſion as our books: but the little that was ever learned concerning the ancient ſtate of America, ſeems to demonſtrate the falſity of this opinion.

THE HISTORY OF WOMEN.

CHAP. I.

A ſhort ſketch of the Antediluvian Hiſtory of Women.

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BY the Moſaic hiſtory of the creation it appears, that the males and females of all the other animals, except man, were formed, not only of the ſame materials, and in the ſame manner, but alſo at the ſame time. When the ſacred hiſtorian, however, deſcribes the creation of the human genus; he informs us, that the female was diſtinguiſhed from the male by being formed not of the duſt of the earth, as he was, but of a part of the body of the male himſelf *. Such as have been fond

* Various and ridiculous are the fables related by oriental writers concerning the creation of the firſt pair. We ſhall only mention a few of theſe propagated by the Jewiſh Rabbies, whoſe ancient legends equal, if not ſurpaſs, in abſurdity even thoſe of more modern ages.—God, ſay they, at firſt created Adam with a long tail; but afterward, on conſidering him attentively, he thought he would look better without it: reſolving, however, not to loſe any thing that he had made, he cut it off, and formed it into a woman: and hence the ſex derive their low and inferior nature. Others of them tell us, that the firſt human being was created double, of both ſexes, and joined ſide to ſide; that God improving on his original plan, ſeparated the male from the female part, where they had been joined together, and made them into two diſtinct beings; and that from hence aroſe the perpetual inclination of the ſexes to join themſelves together again.

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of maintaining the ſuperiority of women pretend, that from this circumſtance of having been made of double refined matter, they have derived their ſuperior beauty and excellence.

NOT long after the creation, the deception of the firſt woman by the ſerpent, and the fatal conſequences ariſing from that deception, furniſh the moſt intereſting ſtory in the whole hiſtory of the ſex. But as that ſtory is already ſo well known, we ſhall paſs over it in ſilence, and proceed to relate thoſe few anecdotes which have been handed down to us concerning the antediluvian women.

Cauſe of the diſpute between Cain and Abel.

IN the ſacred hiſtory we are told, that when Cain and Abel, the two ſons of Adam, brought their offerings to the Lord, the offering of Cain was rejected, and that of Abel accepted; a circumſtance for which Moſes does not aſſign any reaſon. If tradition, however, deſerves any credit, an oriental tradition ſupplies this defect; and informs us, that Cain and Abel having each of them a twin ſiſter, when they were all become marriageable, Adam propoſed to them, that Cain ſhould marry the twin ſiſter of Abel, and Abel the twin ſiſter of Cain; alleging as his reaſon for this propoſal, that as their circumſtances obliged them to marry their ſiſters, it was proper that they ſhould marry thoſe that were ſeemingly the leaſt related to them. To this propoſal Cain would not agree, and inſiſted on having his own twin ſiſter, becauſe ſhe was fairer than the other. Adam, diſpleaſed at this act of diſobedience, referred the diſpute to the deciſion of the Lord; ordered his ſons to bring each an offering before him; and told them, that the offering which had the preference, would be a declaration in favour of him who preſented it. On the offerings being

brought, and that of Abel accepted, Cain, ſtimulated by reſentment and love, began to revolve in his mind how he might get rid of ſo dangerous a rival, and not being able to fix upon any other method than his deſtruction, as ſoon as they were come down from the Mount where they had been ſacrificing, fell upon him and ſlew him. And thus a woman became the cauſe not only of the firſt quarrel, but of the firſt introduction of death.

Debauchery of the race of Cain.

CAIN and his poſterity being, for this barbarous deed, ſeparated and exiled from the reſt of the human race, began to abandon themſelves to every ſpecies of wickedneſs; and it is ſuppoſed were, on that account, at length denominated Sons and Daughters of Men: while the poſterity of Seth, under the care and tuition of Adam, having as remarkably diſtinguiſhed themſelves for virtue, and a regard to the divine precepts, at length alſo acquired the appellation of Sons and Daughters of God. This family of Seth, according to the oriental writers, fixed its habitation on the mountain where Adam their progenitor was buried; and from the ſacred duſt depoſited there, called it the Holy Mountain: while Cain and his poſterity inhabited the valley below *, and there conſtantly rioted in every ſpecies of lewdneſs and debauchery. In the time of Jared, when the family of Seth was much increaſed, one hundred and twenty of the ſons of that family, or as they were called, the Sons of God, hearing the ſound of muſic, and the noiſe of feſtivity in the valley below, agreed for once to deſcend from their mountain, and partake of the amuſement. On their arrival, they were ſo delighted with the novelty of the ſcene, and ſo captivated with the beauty of the women, who appeared naked, that they yielded to their charms, and defiled

* This tradition does not agree with the baniſhment of Cain, as mentioned by Moſes.

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themſelves with them: having gone this length, it was not likely they ſhould ſtop on the very threſhold of pleaſure: accordingly, returning from time to time to viſit theſe women, they at laſt ventured to intermarry with them; and hence, probably, aroſe the ſtory of the commerce between the Sons of God, and the Daughters of Men: a ſtory which gave birth to an opinion, that by the Sons of God were meant Angels, who had ſo far deviated from the dignity of their incorporeal and celeſtial nature, as to debaſe themſelves by a carnal knowledge of terreſtrial women. To this abſurd and ridiculous notion, no little ſtrength has been added by a forgery, called the Prophecy of Enoch; a prophecy, which, like too many others, is long obſcure and unintelligible*; evident marks of its not having been dictated by that divine ſpirit, who is light and perſpicuity.

BUT though we cannot poſitively aſcertain the preciſe meaning of Moſes, when he ſays, the Sons of God defiled themſelves with the Daughters of Men, we may venture to affirm, that the expreſ-

* The general purport of this long and ill connected prophecy, is, That in thoſe times, women were ſo exceedingly beautiful and tempting, that the Egregarii, or guardian angels, who were ſet to watch over and attend them, being conſtantly expoſed to the whole artillery of their charms, at laſt fell ſo violently in love with them, that they diſcloſed the ſecret to each other, and entered into an agreement, to take to themſelves, from among them, wives of thoſe that were faireſt in their eyes. That accordingly, in the year of the world 1170, they began the execution of their project; and in the moſt daring and flagitious manner continued it to the time of the deluge. That in thoſe days, were born to the angels who had thus married, giants, who devoured human fleſh, of which they were ſo fond, that the race of man began thereby greatly to decreaſe; that many complaints on this ſubject having been made to God, he ſent four archangels, who bound theſe angels, who had joined themſelves to women, and produced this monſtrous progeny, threw them into the great abyſs, and afterward ſent Gabriel, another archangel, to root out and deſtroy the giants.—Other oriental traditions relate, that it was the rebel angels, who had taken arms againſt Omnipotence, that firſt began this infamous converſe with mortal women, from whence ſprung a race of monſters and dæmons inimical to virtue and to man; and who, by their continued crimes, at laſt provoked the Almighty to ſweep them from the face of the earth by an univerſal deluge.

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ſion was made uſe of to characteriſe ſome peculiar ſpecies of wickedneſs, which, with other debaucheries, had become ſo enormous, that the Author of Nature is ſaid to have repented that he had made man; almoſt the whole race of whom he was obliged to deſtroy by the flood, in order that he might raiſe up a new and more perfect generation; which could not have been done, had the wicked been left to have mixed with and contaminated the righteous.

Chaſm in the hiſtory of the ſex.

FROM the flood, there is a chaſm in the hiſtory of women till the time of the patriarch Abraham, when they began to be more frequently introduced into the ſacred ſtory, ſeveral of their actions to be recorded; the laws, cuſtoms, and uſages by which they were governed to be exhibited: all of which, joined to ſome anecdotes of their public and private life, enable us to give a more perfect account of the ancient Iſraelitiſh women, than can be given of thoſe of any other nation, till we come to the Greeks. In exhibiting this account, we have, however, judged it proper, not to take the incidents in the order in which they are related, but to reduce them under different heads, for the ſake of method and regularity.

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CHAP. II.

Of Female Education.

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IF we can form any idea of the general ſtate of mankind in the infancy of the world, from the ſtate in which they appear in the infancy of every nation, we may ſuppoſe that they were originally deſtitute of every thing which depends on civilization and ſociety, and of almoſt every ſpecies of knowledge, but that of procuring a precarious ſubſiſtence from the rivers and foreſts around them.

Obſtructions to education in the early ages.

NECESSARILY impelled to employ the greateſt part of their time in this manner, they would have but little leiſure, and perhaps leſs inclination, to cultivate their minds. The inhabitants of the woods, and of the waves, were only to be caught by force or fraud: in either of which ways, ſtrong exertions, or long and painful watchings, were requiſite; and to theſe exertions, and other efforts, the conſtant calls of nature for ſuſtenance kept up an unremitted attention: hence it would be long before the human mind began to extend its ideas beyond that circle which had been formed by neceſſity, and continued by cuſtom; that courſe of ſtudy and of diſcipline, that application to various languages and arts, which we now call education, was then totally unknown; and in after ages only ſprung up by degrees, according as incidents gave occaſion to thinking on new projects, and acting in new employments.

A CON-

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Source of education.

A CONSIDERABLE part of education is the ſtudy of languages; but as all mankind ſpoke originally the ſame, this laborious part had then no exiſtence. When a diverſity of tongues were introduced, what little communication and commerce was then carried on, could not be properly managed unleſs the parties underſtood one another: and hence the firſt efforts to ſtudy languages. In ſome of the milder climates of Aſia, the earth ſpontaneouſly yielded as much food as ſimple unpampered nature required; and the inhabitants ſupinely enjoyed her gifts, without troubling themſelves with painful exertions of mind or of body: but when the human race had multiplied ſo much, that they were obliged to diſperſe themſelves into climates leſs indulgent, exertion became neceſſary to procure food, and invention to remedy the inconveniencies, and provide againſt the accidents, of climate and ſituation: thus in Egypt, the annual inundations of the Nile obliged them to raiſe houſes on pillars, and to apply to Aſtronomy, that they might know the ſeaſons when theſe inundations were to come upon them. The rigour of ſeaſons, in places more remote from the ſun, obliged them to cover themſelves with ſkins, and to build houſes: and the ſame cauſe, perhaps, at firſt, gave birth to the uſe of fire. Were we thus to trace almoſt every human invention to its ſource, we ſhould generally find that ſource to have been neceſſity.

Progreſs of education and arts.

IN the patriarchal ages, and ſome time after, even among people conſiderably removed from barbarity, we have hardly the leaſt veſtige of education among the men*, and would therefore in vain look for it among the women. In climates where the ſpon-

* Schools where men were taught the arts of propheſying and of magic, were, probably, the firſt that were inſtituted; the former appear to have been erected by the Iſraelites, the latter by the Egyptians or Phœnicians.

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taneous productions of the earth were few, and where men were become too numerous to be maintained by hunting and fiſhing, neceſſity would ſtimulate to paſturage, and perhaps to ſome rude efforts in agriculture; but as theſe could not be carried on without ſome kind of inſtruments, it was poſſibly to furniſh ſuch, that Tubal Cain began firſt to work in iron and in braſs. Such rude inſtruments as he at firſt conſtructed, might upon trial ſuggeſt to him the improvements neceſſary for making others more adapted to the purpoſe: and theſe again, might lead on to works of fancy, which were probably the firſt exerciſes which opened and expanded the powers of the human mind, giving birth to carving and gilding, and ſeveral other works of taſte, which the Iſraelites had carried to no inconſiderable degree of perfection in the time of Solomon; and even to chymiſtry, of which Moſes muſt have had no incompetent ſkill to enable him to ſtamp the golden calf to powder. Into ſuch exerciſes and trades, were the men, in the times we are ſpeaking of, initiated; but it is in vain that we endeavour to diſcover what was taught to the women: whether they were regularly inſtructed in any thing, or left to learn what they could from nature, or from chance; which laſt we are inclined to think was the caſe, as writing and reading were not then invented; as the ſciences were but few, and theſe few only in their infancy; and as women were not valued for any mental qualifications, but only for their perſonal charms.

Of the Egyptians.

Of all the nations which preſent themſelves in the periods we are conſidering, the Egyptians moſt deſervedly claim our attention; as it was from them that we derived the firſt principles of all our arts, ſciences, and cultivation. It was the Egyptians who firſt taught the rude and uninſtructed Greeks: the Greeks tranſmitted

mitted their knowledge to the Romans: and the Romans carried their knowledge, and their chains, over half the globe. In whatever light we view the Egyptians, they do more honour to human nature than any of the ancients, as they excelled them all in laws, in arts, and in government; ſciences in which they believed, or pretended to believe, they had been improving themſelves during a period of no leſs than one hundred thouſand years; though this muſt undoubtedly appear fabulous, it is certain that they were allowed by moſt of the ancients, to have been one of the firſt people who were civilized and formed into a nation governed by laws, moſtly founded on equity and wiſdom; in ſhort they were, even in the diſtant periods we are ſpeaking of, a people not much inferior to many of thoſe which in our times make no deſpicable figure in the preſent civilized ſyſtem of Europe.

It is among the Egyptians only, that, in the periods under review, we meet with any thing reſembling a ſyſtem of ſtudy and education; their magicians, in whom moſt of their learning centered, ſtudied, and taught, ſuch ſciences as were then known; the moſt diſtinguiſhed of which was Aſtronomy, from which, it appears, that women were not altogether excluded; for we are told that Athyrte, the daughter of Seſoſtris, encouraged her father to undertake his chimerical ſcheme of conquering the world, by aſſuring him of ſucceſs, from her divinations, from her dreams in the temples, and from the prodigies ſhe had ſeen in the air. Almoſt every writer on ancient Egypt mentions, that the women managed the greateſt part of ſuch buſineſs as was tranſacted without doors, and that the commerce of the nation was peculiarly allotted to them; it is therefore highly probable, that they were taught the uſe of numbers and figures, as far as they were then

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known: a ſcience without the uſe of which trade muſt have been exceedingly imperfect and irregular. As writing alſo was known at an early period in Egypt, and as it is hardly leſs neceſſary in commerce than the uſe of figures, it is probable alſo, that the women were taught the writing then in uſe. As the ſoftneſs and ſentimental feelings of the female heart ſeem excellently adapted to the ſoothing ſtrains of muſic, muſic has therefore been a part of the education of the ſex from the remoteſt ages of antiquity: Moſes frequently mentions ſinging men and ſinging women, and we ſhall afterwards meet with ſinging women among a variety of the nations we ſhall have occaſion to mention. The Egyptians, however, were in this reſpect ſingular; the ſame reaſon which determined other nations to teach women that pleaſing art, determined the Egyptians to debar them from it*; becauſe, ſaid they, it ſoftens and relaxes the mind. But when we recollect what we juſt now related of the employment of women, it will in a great meaſure elucidate this ſingularity: it was probably the opinion of the legiſlature, that too much ſoftneſs and delicacy would diſqualify them for managing the affairs of trade and commerce; and that though a certain ſoftneſs of the ſex was encouraged in all other countries, it would but ill have ſuited the Egyptian women, who were generally occupied in ſuch employments as were every where elſe deſtined to the men. However this be, when we ſurvey the accounts given us by the ancients, of the arts, ſciences, laws; and, above all, of the culture, and wiſdom of the Egyptians; when we conſider the high eſtimation, in which women were held, and the powers with which they were inveſted; when, to theſe, we add the literary fame of the nation, we have the

* Herodotus, and ſome other authors, doubt whether the Egyptians prohibited their women from learning muſic.

ſtrongeſt

ſtrongeſt reaſons to conclude, that though we are at this period unacquainted with their ſyſtem of female education, it certainly was ſuch as ſuited the dignity of ſo wiſe a people, and of a ſex ſo loved and reſpected.

Of the Phœnicians.

IT is not eaſy to determine whether the Phœnicians at firſt borrowed their learning from the Egyptians, but, however that be, they were in the times we are conſidering, little behind them in knowledge. They cultivated Arithmetic and Aſtronomy, and applied them to the purpoſes of trade and navigation. Moſchus, a Sydonian, before the Trojan war, taught the philoſophical doctrine of Atoms; and Abdomeneus of Tyre undertook to diſpute with Solomon, king of Iſrael; in thoſe days reckoned the moſt redoubtable champion of learning and of wiſdom. Tyre and Sydon were at this time renowned for the ſciences and for philoſophy.

MAN, in his rude and uncultivated ſtate, forms his connections with woman from a regard to the beauty of her perſon only; when he becomes civilized, he regards the qualities of her mind, as well as the charms of her body. We can hardly therefore ſuppoſe, that the Phœnicians, a people, who in commerce and navigation excelled all others, and were ſecond to none in politeneſs and learning; would totally neglect to inſtil into the minds of their women, any of that knowledge which was in ſo much national eſteem and veneration; but we only offer this as conjecture, as the hiſtory of theſe people is entirely ſilent on the ſubject: and indeed hiſtory in general throws but a faint gleam of light on the ages under review; which, among many other reaſons, may in part be owing to that peace and quiet which we may

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ſuppoſe the world then enjoyed for many ages; for hiſtory paſſes in ſilence over whole centuries of peace, and takes notice only of wars, conqueſts, and revolutions; as if nothing were worthy of the ear of poſterity, but the crimes and follies of their anceſtors.

Ancient ſtate of Europe.

WHAT we have obſerved of the Phœnicians, may, in a great meaſure, be equally applied to the Babylonians; they are acknowledged by all antiquity, to have been the firſt who made uſe of writing in their public and judicial acts; but though the exact period in which they began this invention is not known, we are nevertheleſs certain, that they were early diſtinguiſhed for their politeneſs and learning. We ſhall have occaſion afterwards, to relate the care and pains they took in adorning the perſons of their women; from which we may conclude, that they did not leave their minds without cultivation and improvement. The nations which were contemporary with, or for ſeveral ages ſucceeded to thoſe we have now mentioned, were, when compared to them, as the reſt of the world now is, when compared to Europe; hardly juſt entering on the threſhold of knowledge: and Europe, which now appears with ſuch diſtinguiſhed luſtre, was then involved in ignorance and barbarity; nor had its ſcattered and wretched inhabitants diſcovered any ſymptoms of that genius which now eclipſes all other countries. It was by ſome colonies from Aſia, that the ſciences were firſt introduced among them. And ſuch is the fate of human affairs, that from the time theſe ſciences were firſt tranſplanted, they ſeemed to abandon their native ſoil, and attach themſelves entirely to Europe. The Aſiatics either loſt their taſte for them, or, in proſecuting them, had already exhauſted their utmoſt powers; the Europeans acquired

that

that taſte, and continue ſtill to cultivate and extend it, by ſtretches of genius and invention, to which no limits can be fixed.

Of ſome other ancient nations.

WHEN, from Europe, we again return to the Eaſt, we cannot help lamenting, that antiquity has hardly left us any traces of the manner in which their women were educated; and it is from ſcattered hints only, that we can diſcover any thing concerning them. One of theſe hints informs us, that ſome of the nations whom Cyrus conquered had taught their women muſic; for Cyrus gave two female muſicians, who were his captives, as a preſent to his uncle Cyaxares; and female as well as male muſicians were in thoſe times frequently retained by the great to amuſe them in their hours of relaxation and feſtivity, by their ſkill in playing upon ſuch inſtruments as were then in uſe, by the melody of their voices, and by the various geſtures which they practiſed in dancing. If, in the times we are conſidering, the plan of female education comprehended any thing farther, we may ſuppoſe that it took in only ſuch other arts of attraction as the eaſtern women have always been famous for, and which the men have always regarded as their principal qualification. In a few caſes, however, it is probable, they were inſtructed in ſome of the uſeful learning of the times; for the education of the children of the kings of the Medes and Perſians was for many ages committed to the women. Dejoces, their firſt king, began the cuſtom; and it was continued till ſome ages after the reign of Cyrus, and is at this day practiſed in many places of the Eaſt. As theſe young monarchs were entirely entruſted to the care of women till the age of fifteen or ſixteen, one would naturally conclude, that the women muſt have been capable of teaching, at leaſt a part of, the faſhionable learning of the times: but if it was the ſame among the ancient Medes and Perſians,

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ſians, as it is now among their deſcendants, they were not capable of doing ſo; for the education which the young eaſtern princes at preſent receive from their women, is little elſe than the firſt principles of effeminacy and debauchery, with hardly even a ſmall tincture of that learning beſtowed on their ſubjects: and hence ſo many of the eaſtern monarchs dedicate their lives to cruelty and debauchery. Even Cyrus himſelf, though trained up in a better manner, and almoſt in every reſpect ſuperior to the herd of eaſtern monarchs, ſtained his memory with the fouleſt infamy, by perverting the education of the Lydians, for no other crime than endeavouring to regain their liberty, of which he had unjuſtly deprived them. Cyrus had intruſted the gold which he had found in the treaſury of Crœſus king of Lydia, to Pactyas, one of his favourites; who ſeeing himſelf maſter of ſo much wealth, thought he could not better employ it, than in inſtigating the Lydians to place him at their head, and ſhake off the yoke of the conqueror. Cyrus, in revenge, determined to carry off the whole of the people, and ſell them for ſlaves; a reſolution which he made known to Crœſus, his priſoner; who fearing the utter deſtruction of his country, adviſed Cyrus only to take vengeance on Pactyas; and in order to prevent any future attempt of the ſame nature, to forbid the Lydians the uſe of arms, and oblige them to be educated in the moſt debauched and effeminate manner. Cyrus followed this advice, and the Lydians ſoon became the moſt infamous and abandoned people in the world. Hiſtory affords but too many examples of monarchs, and of parents, having winked at the improper education of their ſubjects and children: this is the only inſtance where the ſource of every virtue was avowedly contaminated by public authority; an inſtance in which we are at a loſs to deter-

mine, whether the character of Cyrus, or of Crœſus, appears the moſt deſpicable and infamous.

WERE we to indulge in idle ſpeculation; were we to form conjectures without proper authority to ſupport them; we might relate many plauſible opinions concerning the education of women among the ancients; but as the ſubject, from the time of the Egyptians and ſome other nations we have mentioned, to thoſe of Greece and Rome, is involved in the gloom of obſcurity, we rather chuſe to paſs over it in ſilence, than to hazard opinions, when we are uncertain whether the ſcale of probability preponderates for or againſt them.

Of the Greek women.

WE ſhall ſee afterward, when we come to treat of the rank and condition of women, that in Greece, even in its moſt flouriſhing and cultivated ſtate, they were little better than ſlaves: nor indeed was it poſſible, that they could in any place ever arrive at that importance ſeemingly deſigned them by nature, while their genius was not cultivated, nor their latent qualities called forth into view. Other qualities, ſuch as beauty, and the art of ſhewing it to advantage, may, in theſe moments when the heart is ſoftened by love, or the ſpirits elevated by wine, give to the women a temporary aſcendency over the men, and enable them to bend them at pleaſure; as in the caſe of Thais and Alexander. Such an aſcendency, however, is commonly but fleeting and tranſient; cool reaſon ſoon reſumes the place which paſſion had uſurped, and the empire which had been built on paſſion, tumbles like the baſeleſs fabric of a viſion; while that which is ſupported by education and ſenſe, ſtands the teſt of time, and the various incidents of life. It is, however, to be lamented, that a proper education has ſeldom fallen to the lot of women; even in the politeſt coun-

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tries, it is either too much neglected, or conducted on a frivolous and miſtaken plan. The education of the Greek women, during what are called the heroic ages *, ſeems to have been of this nature; for we find Peleus, in the Andromache of Euripides, reproaching Menelaus, father of the famous Helen, for being the occaſion of the diſſolute conduct of that lady, by the bad education he had given her: nor have we reaſon to believe, that in thoſe times bad education was confined to this ſingle inſtance only, but rather that it was a general evil, and never after properly remedied; a conjecture which the ſubſequent hiſtory of Greece will but too amply verify.

Education of ancient women not calculated to cultivate their minds.

THERE is not a ſubject which ancient hiſtory takes leſs notice of, than that of education, and particularly of the education of women. In early periods, and among uncultivated people, the ſex do not ſeem to have been of conſequence enough to employ the attention of the public, nor the pen of the hiſtorian: a few ſketches of the plan of education ſettled by Solon, the famous Athenian lawgiver, are the moſt ancient that have been handed down to our times; and they ſerve to corroborate an opinion, which we have always entertained, that the education of the ancients was more directed to improve the body than the mind. Solon ordained, that youth in general ſhould be firſt taught to ſwim, and to imbibe the rudiments of literature; that the poor ſhould be inſtructed in trades, mechanic arts, and agriculture; but that ſuch as could afford a genteel education ſhould learn to play on muſical inſtruments, to ride, to hunt, and be expert in every kind of exerciſe; to all which they were to add the ſtudy of

* Several of the firſt ages, during the infancy of the Grecian ſtates, were called heroic; becauſe then the men dedicated almoſt the whole of their time to feats of heroiſm and of arms.

philo-

philoſophy. Such was his ſyſtem of male education; a ſyſtem more calculated to ſtrengthen the body than to cultivate the mind. Such gleanings of his female ſyſtem as have reached our times, are ſtill more extraordinary: young women were ordered to exerciſe themſelves in running, wreſtling, throwing quoits, darts, and other maſculine amuſements; which muſt have tended in the ſtrongeſt manner to deſtroy every ſeed of delicacy that nature had implanted in the female mind; and which, in all probability, gave birth to that boldneſs and effrontery, for which the Athenian women at laſt were ſo remarkable. CHAP. II.

If Solon, in his ſcheme of legiſlation, inſtituted that any culture ſhould be beſtowed on the female mind, ſuch inſtitutions have not reached to our times: and when we conſider how the Greek women were treated, and that healthful and robuſt bodies were reckoned their chief qualification, as enabling them to give ſtrong and healthful children to the ſtate; we have reaſon to believe, that no ſuch inſtitutions ever exiſted. Lycurgus, the no leſs famous Spartan legiſlator, ſeems to have thought women almoſt below his notice: nor need we wonder at this, when we conſider, that his ſole intention, and the conſtant ſcope of all his laws, was to diveſt mankind of all that was implanted in them by nature; and, upon the principles of art, to form a race of heroes, who ſhould be inſenſible to every feeling but the love of their country. Women, he found, were but ill calculated for this purpoſe: patriotiſm is a principle ſeldom ſo ſtrong in them as in men, and humanity is generally much ſtronger: the acuteneſs of their feelings made them leſs able to bear all the pains and difficulties of eradicating whatever is natural, and the weakneſs of their bodies diſqualified them for becoming heroines: they were therefore unfit ſubjects for carrying the ideas of Lycurgus into execution; and on that ac-

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count, it ſeems probable, he gave himſelf little other trouble about them, than to take care that their company ſhould neither effeminate nor debauch his men.

Their minds almoſt totally neglected.

THAT the Grecian women had not the leaſt tincture of polite education, even in the moſt flouriſhing periods of their ſtates, appears from the reſpect and eſteem, which public proſtitutes acquired, merely by having the advantage over them in this accompliſhment. We ſhall have occaſion to mention this ſubject afterwards; and therefore at preſent ſhall only obſerve, that many of the greateſt of their philoſophers publicly viſited theſe proſtitutes, and even ſometimes carried their wives to be inſtructed by their leſſons. Beſides what we have already mentioned, we find that a few of the Greek women were inſtructed in muſic; and that ſuch only were admitted to ſome of their public feaſts; their mothers, or other female relations, alſo taught them the common female employments and cuſtoms of their country, and inſtilled into the minds of ſuch as would receive it, a tincture of that Stoical pride and heroiſm for which their men were ſo much renowned: in every thing elſe, they were miſerably deficient, and their conſtant confinement, to their want of education, added want of knowledge of the world; ſo that on the whole, never were women found ſo ignorant in a nation ſo much famed for knowledge.

Of the Roman women.

IF we except the Egyptians, the whole hiſtory of antiquity exhibits to us a ſcene in which we find women groaning under the hard hand of oppreſſion, deprived of many of the rights of nature; and till we arrive at the Romans, never attaining to any natural or political conſequence. In Rome, however, we find them not only emerging from ſlavery, but ſtarting up at once into

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real importance. In the earlier periods of this great republic, the Romans had but few laws, and no intercourſe but with rude and ferocious neighbours like themſelves: hence the only education of men was that of war, rigid œconomy, and inflexible patriotiſm; which are all virtues of neceſſity in the infancy of almoſt every ſtate. The education of the women conſiſted in learning the duties and employments of domeſtic life; ſuch as cookery, ſpinning, weaving, and ſewing; which were taught them by their mothers or relations. In thoſe days, children were not ſuckled in the hut of a mercenary nurſe, but by the chaſte mother who bore them; their education, during nonage, was in her hands; and it was her chief care to inſtil into them every virtuous principle: in her preſence, every looſe word, or improper action, were ſtrictly prohibited; ſhe ſuperintended not only their ſerious ſtudies, but even their amuſements, which were always conducted with decency and moderation. But by degrees, as the Romans became rich with the plunder of their neighbours, as the taſte for the arts and ſciences became more general, the education of the women began to be extended on a larger ſcale; and to the domeſtic duties, taught them by their mothers, were added ſuch parts of polite education, as were thought neceſſary for cultivating their minds: this education we know, from the ſtory of Virginea, they received at public ſchools; where ſciences and literature, no longer confined to rigid philoſophers only, began to aſſume a ſofter form, and to ſuit themſelves to female talents and genius.

It has long been alleged by the men, that the women, when learned, are generally pedants; how far this opinion is juſt, we ſhall not pretend to determine; but ſhould it really be ſo, we may naturally enough account for it: the knowledge of women, in general,

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general, is much leſs extenſive than that of the men; on this account, when any individual among them finds that ſhe is poſſeſſed of a conſiderable ſhare of knowledge, ſhe conſiders herſelf as thereby ſo much elevated above the reſt of her ſex, that ſhe cannot help taking every opportunity of ſhewing this elevation.

JUVENAL exhibits ſome of the Roman ladies of his time in this light: "They fall, ſays he, on the praiſes of Virgil; they "weigh in the ſame balance the merit of that poet and of Ho-"mer; they find excuſes for Dido's having ſtabbed herſelf, and "determine of the beautiful, and of the ſovereign good." Whether the ſatire here exhibited be true or falſe, it affords a proof, that, in the days of this poet, learning was not neglected by the women of Rome: but this is not the only proof we can bring to ſupport this fact; others are frequently to be met with in the Roman hiſtory. Cicero mentions, with encomiums, ſeveral ladies, whoſe taſte in eloquence and philoſophy did honour to their ſex; and Quintilian, with no ſmall applauſe, has quoted ſome of the letters of Cornelia; beſides which, we have fortunately a ſpeech of Hortenſia preſerved by Appian; which for elegance of language, and juſtneſs of thought, would have done honour to a Cicero, or a Demoſthenes *. What gave occaſion to the ſpeech was,

* The unhappy women you ſee here imploring your juſtice and bounty, would never have preſumed to appear in this place, had they not firſt made uſe of all other means, which their natural modeſty could ſuggeſt to them. Though our appearing here may ſeem contrary to the rules of decency preſcribed to our ſex, which we have hitherto obſerved with all ſtrictneſs; yet the loſs of our father's children, brothers, and huſbands, may ſufficiently excuſe us, eſpecially when their unhappy deaths are made a pretence for our further misfortunes: you pretend that they had offended and provoked you, but what injury have we women done, that we muſt be impoveriſhed? if we are blameable as the men, why do you not proſcribe us too? have we declared you enemies to your country? have we ſuborned your ſoldiers? raiſed troops againſt you, or oppoſed you in the purſuits of thoſe honours and offices which you claim?

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was, the Triumvirs of Rome wanting a large ſum of money for carrying on a war, and having met with great difficulties in raiſing it, they drew up a liſt of fourteen hundred of the richeſt of the ladies, whom they intended to tax. Theſe ladies, after having in vain tried every method to evade ſo great an innovation, at laſt having choſen Hortenſia for their ſpeaker, went along with her to the market-place, where ſhe addreſſed the Triumvirs, while they were adminiſtering juſtice. The Triumvirs being offended at the boldneſs of the women, ordered them to be driven away; but the populace growing tumultuous, they were afraid of an inſurrection; and reduced the liſt of women to be taxed to four hundred.

As we do not propoſe to write the hiſtory of learned women, but only to give a general detail of the care beſtowed on the education of that ſex; we return to obſerve, that the Romans were at great pains in teaching their young men. Thoſe who could afford it, commonly kept in their own houſes preceptors to inſtruct them; thoſe who could not, ſent them to public ſchools, where

claim? We pretend not to govern the republic, nor is it our ambition which has drawn the preſent misfortune on our heads; empire, dignities, and honours are not for us; why ſhould we then contribute to a war in which we have no manner of intereſt? It is true, indeed, that in the Carthaginian war, our mothers aſſiſted the republic, which was, at that time, reduced to the utmoſt diſtreſs; but neither their houſes, their lands, nor their moveables, were ſold for that ſervice; ſome rings and a few jewels furniſhed the ſupply; nor was it conſtraint, nor violence, that forced theſe from them: what they contributed was the voluntary offering of generoſity. What danger at preſent threatens Rome? If the Gauls, or Parthians, were encamped on the banks of the Tiber, or the Anio, you ſhould find us not leſs zealous in the defence of our country than our mothers were before us; but it becomes not us, and we are reſolved that we will not be any way concerned in civil war. Neither Marius, nor Cæſar, nor Pompey, ever thought of obliging us to take part in the domeſtic troubles which their ambition had raiſed; nay, nor did even Sylla himſelf, who firſt ſet up tyranny in Rome; and yet you aſſume the glorious title of Reformers of the State! a title which will turn to your eternal infamy; if, without the leaſt regard to the laws of equity, you perſiſt in your wicked reſolution of plundering thoſe of their lives and fortunes, who have given you no juſt cauſe of offence.

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they were generally inſtructed by Grecian maſters: beſides theſe methods, ſuch fathers as were capable, taught their own children, not only the literature of the times, but alſo morality, and their duty to their country. Cato inſtructed his ſon in ſuch a variety of arts and exerciſes, as ſeem almoſt improbable; and Auguſtus, though ſovereign of the world, taught his grandchildren to write. When ſuch were the teachers, when ſuch the love of learning, we may aſſure ourſelves that women, who had now attained no ſmall importance, were not neglected: and it is probable, from that greatneſs of mind, which many of them in a variety of inſtances diſplayed, that their education had always a tendency, not only to inſpire them with ſentiments of morality, but likewiſe with that inflexible conſtancy and firmneſs of mind, ſo exceedingly neceſſary in a ſtate, whoſe agitations and convulſions were ſo frequent, that every member ſtood in need of the utmoſt fortitude to ſuſtain the ſhock.

SUCH a mode of education, however, we imagine, was counteracting nature, and robbing the ſex of that ſoftneſs, and timidity, in which conſiſts half their charms; and ſuch, though in a few inſtances it ſucceeded, never had any general influence; for the Roman women, though they boaſted while in ſecurity of all the heroiſm of their huſbands, were in ſuch a conſternation when Hannibal approached the gates of Rome, that they were forbid to appear in the ſtreets, leſt their cries ſhould diſpirit the ſoldiers, and ſpread a general panic through the city.

As we are able only to give ſo imperfect an account of the female education of the Romans, a people whoſe hiſtory we are almoſt as well acquainted with, as with that of our own times; it

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it is not to be expected that we can throw much light upon that ſubject, among the nations that were contemporary with them, as they were in a ſtate of too much ignorance to have any hiſtorical records; and as we have no complete detail of their manners and cuſtoms, but only ſome ſketches in Tacitus, and a few of the other Roman writers.

Women of the northern nations, how educated.

If by education we mean the culture of letters, of arts, and of ſciences; in vain will we look for it among the ancient inhabitants of the North. The Scandinavians, and other tribes, who, in thoſe times, poſſeſſed the greateſt part of Europe, were hardly acquainted with the ſlighteſt rudiments of literature, or of ſcience *. In the ſavage ſtate in which they were, no ideas are entertained of the neceſſity, or utility, of any thing but what immediately contributes to the ſuſtenance or clothing of the body; no honour to procuring theſe, by any other methods, than rapine and plunder; hence their men were trained to gaining their ſubſiſtance by feats of arms, and waſting it in thoughtleſs feſtivity. Their women, who frequently accompanied the men in their plundering expeditions, and who beſides had every labour and drudgery to perform, could not have much time for attaining knowledge; as they were not, however, always of theſe parties, but ſometimes left at home; if there was any glimmerings of knowledge; if there was any wiſdom, it was moſtly to be found among them; and they acquired it, not by a laborious courſe of education, but by experience and reflection upon the contingencies which happened in theſe hours of ſolitude, when the human mind is moſt ſuſceptible of inſtruction.

* Such is the caſe at this time with the Druſes; they reckon learning one of thoſe low and contemptible acquiſitions only fit for women.

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WHAT they had thus learned, of arts, of improvements, or œconomy, they taught to their daughters; hence women were generally more enlightened than men; and hence alſo they acquired an extraordinary degree of eſteem, and were often conſulted as oracles. Beſides the few arts and domeſtic occupations known among a people ſo rude and ſimple, the mothers alſo exerted themſelves in teaching their daughters the virtues of prudence and chaſtity; which they did no leſs by example than by precept; and both being united, had ſo happy an effect, that the ancient Scandinavian women were not only among the firſt who attained to that eſteem due to their ſex, but who laid the foundation of that honour and regard, which Europe at preſent pays as a tribute to beauty and merit.

Effects of chivalry.

DURING the long and ſucceſsful reign of chivalry in Europe; as women were the conſtant object of romantic heroiſm and extravagant adoration, we may naturally conclude, that their education tended chiefly to enable them to ſhew themſelves in ſuch a manner, as to excite heroes to fight for, and lovers to adore them. Even ſo late as the beginning of the fourteenth century, there was hardly any learning among the men; the Greek was ſo entirely neglected, that the celebrated Petrarch could not in Italy, nor France, find one perſon capable of inſtructing him in it: the Latin was known in a rude and imperfect manner only to a few; and hardly was there to be found a woman, who could read the language of her own country; and if ſuch a one was here and there to be met with, ſhe was reckoned a kind of prodigy.

WHEN the men, who before had ſpent their days in tournaments and feats of arms, began to turn their attention towards the

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arts of peace, the women were likewiſe laid under the neceſſity of varying their mode of education; as they found that the ſame arts which effectually captivated a knight clad in armour and ignorance, were in vain practiſed upon the enlightened ſcholar and philoſopher. Ambitious ſtill to retain the power they already poſſeſſed, and conſcious that the way to pleaſe the men was to ſeem fond of what they approved of, and diſlike what they diſliked; they applied themſelves to letters and to philoſophy, hoping to keep poſſeſſion by their talents, of what they had gained by their charms. Though theſe meaſures were not calculated to inſpire love, and attract the heart, and conſequently did not produce the effects which the ladies intended, yet they raiſed them in that period to a pitch of learning, unknown in any other. They preached in public, ſupported controverſies, publiſhed and defended Theſes's, filled the chairs of philoſophy and law, harangued the popes in Latin, wrote Greek, and read Hebrew: nuns became poeteſſes, women of quality divines, and young girls, with a ſoftneſs of eloquent enthuſiaſm, publicly exhorted the Chriſtian princes to take up arms for the recovery of the Holy Land. The learned languages were now conſidered as indiſpenſably neceſſary; they were taught not only to men, but to women of almoſt all ranks and conditions; who, not content with Latin only, often read the Old Teſtament in Hebrew, and the New in Greek. In this manner was female genius turned into a wrong channel; it was diverted from the duties of domeſtic life; it was either ſoured by ſtudy, or rendered petulant by learning; and while it acquired empty words and falſe philoſophy, it loſt much of its native ſprightlineſs, and became daily more an object of admiration, and leſs an object of love.

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Reverſe of this picture.

It has been often obſerved, that violent exertions of mind, as well as of body, conſtantly leave a languor behind them, in proportion to the efforts that have been made. This was remarkably the caſe with female literature; every mental power had been for a long time over-ſtretched, and the greateſt relaxation ſoon followed of conſequence: from their knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; from their ſkill in the empty diſputations of Ariſtotelian philoſophy, and of divinity, women began at laſt to diſcover, that they acquired only an empty fame; and that in proportion as they gained the eſteem of the head, they became leſs objects of the heart. On this diſcovery, it was neceſſary for them to change their plan; they therefore began by degrees to abandon learning, and attach themſelves again to thoſe female arts, which were more likely to be productive of love, than of fame and applauſe.

Further revolutions.

While this change of female manners was taking place, the greateſt part of Europe exhibited a ſcene of ſeeming inconſiſtency; enthuſiaſm and gallantry, religion and licentiouſneſs, were conſtantly practiſed by the ſame perſons, and ſeemed as if perfectly reconciled to each other. Learning, however, declined ſo faſt, that in a ſhort time women became as famous for ignorance of their own language, as they had been formerly for their knowledge of others; inſomuch, that during a great part of the ſixteenth and ſeventeenth centuries, there was hardly a woman to be found in the politeſt countries of Europe, who could dictate a tolerable letter in her own tongue, or ſpell it with decent propriety: the only little reading which they at this period commonly concerned themſelves with, was a few receipts in cookery to bring on, and a few receipts in phyſic to take off diſeaſes; together

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together with the wrangling and unintelligible theology of the times; a ſcience to which women of all ages and countries have been peculiarly addicted, as it greatly intereſts their paſſions; and, perhaps, conſoles them in the many ſolitary moments in which they are left alone, and as it were excluded from buſineſs and from the world. But even theſe favourite ſtudies, and every other part of female amuſement and œconomy, not being ſufficient to fill up all their vacant hours, they now applied themſelves aſſiduouſly to various kinds of needle-work; and many women of the firſt rank were themſelves taught, and inſtructed their daughters in, the arts of flowering and embroidery; which they practiſed ſo well in their leiſure hours, that much of the furniture of their houſes was decorated in this manner with their own hands.

AFTER the diſcovery and conqueſt of America, immenſe treaſures had been conſtantly imported from thence into Europe. From the trade carried on to the Eaſt and Weſt Indies, to Africa, and other parts of the globe, perhaps ſtill greater wealth had been accumulated; theſe at laſt beginning to operate, turned the minds of the greateſt part of Europe from that ſober and œconomical plan of life, to which their poverty and imperfect knowledge of trade and agriculture had ſubjected them; and ſubſtituted in its place, gaiety, expence, and parade. Numbers of people, who, perhaps, not in the moſt rigid paths of juſtice, had acquired immenſe fortunes in the Eaſt, tranſported themſelves back to Europe, bringing along with them all the arrogance of wealth, effeminacy of manners, and love of pageantry and ſhow, for which the eaſtern nations have ever been remarkable. Theſe, and ſeveral other cauſes combining together, totally changed the manners

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of Europe; and inſtead of ſober frugality, and other domeſtic virtues of the women, introduced luxury and diſſipation; with a taſte for all the tinſel glare of unſubſtantial trifles.

THE French, who have always been remarkably diſtinguiſhed for vivacity and ſhow, took the lead in this new mode of life, and ſoon diſſeminated it all over Europe; which, for at leaſt theſe two centuries paſt, has aukwardly imitated every light faſhion and frippery of that volatile people, with little better ſucceſs than a Bear dances a hornpipe, or a Monkey puts on the gravity of an alderman.

French ladies, their education.

IN France, were women firſt introduced to court; their education, which before that introduction, conſiſted in reading their own language, in learning needle-work, and the offices of domeſtic life, was then by degrees changed to vocal and inſtrumental muſic, drawing, dancing, and dreſſing in the moſt faſhionable manner; to which we may add, the art of captivating and governing their men. This flimſy pattern was copied by every other nation: ſome ſtrokes of improvement were from time to time added by the French; till at laſt almoſt every thing uſeful was boldly ſtruck out from the plan of female education; and the women of the preſent age thereby robbed of more than half their native excellence, and rendered objects more ſought after to divert a melancholy hour, or ſatisfy a lawleſs paſſion, than to become the ſocial partners of a life directed by reaſon and religion. We muſt, however, allow, that the French ladies are not all ſo much devoted to faſhion and pleaſure, as to neglect every thing elſe. France has produced ſeveral women diſtinguiſhed for their judgment and learning; and even in the preſent diſſipated age, while

female coteries commonly meet for diverſion, or for gaming, there are in Paris ſocieties of women, which meet at ſtated times to determine the merit of every new work; and happy is the author who meets their approbation; the French being too polite to ſet themſelves in open oppoſition to the judgment of their ladies, whether they may think it right or wrong.

Preſent mode of female education.

SHOULD this imperfect attempt, to write the Hiſtory of the Fair, ſurvive the preſent, and be read in any future generation, when this frivolous mode of female education ſhall have given place to a better, that our readers may then have ſome idea of what it was towards the cloſe of the eighteenth century, we ſhall juſt ſketch the outlines of it as now practiſed in the politeſt countries of Europe. Among the firſt leſſons, which a mother teaches her daughter, is that important article, according to the modern phraſe, of holding up her head, and learning a proper carriage: this begins to be inculcated at the age of three or four at lateſt; and is ſtrenuouſly inſiſted on for many years afterward. When the young lady has learned imperfectly to read her own language, and ſometimes even ſooner, ſhe is ſent to a boarding-ſchool, where ſhe is inſtructed in the moſt flimſy and uſeleſs parts of needle-work; while of thoſe, which ſhe muſt need, if ever ſhe enters into domeſtic life, ſhe is left entirely ignorant. While ſhe is here, ſome part of her time is alſo allotted to learning to read either her own language, or the languages of ſome of the neighbouring kingdoms; all of which are too frequently taught without a proper attention to Grammar or Orthography. Writing, and Arithmetic, likewiſe employ a part of her time; but theſe, particularly the laſt, are only conſidered as auxiliary accompliſhments, which

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are not to be carried into life, and conſequently deſerve but little attention; the grand effort is generally made to teach the girl what the woman will relinquiſh; ſuch as drawing, muſic, and dancing; theſe, as they are arts agreeable to youthful ſprightlineſs, often engage the young lady ſo much, as to make her neglect, or forget every thing elſe. To theſe are added, the modes of dreſſing in faſhion, the punctilios of behaving in company; and we are ſorry to ſay, that into ſome ſchools have been introduced maſters to teach the faſhionable games at cards; a diſſipation, if not a vice, which already prevails too much among both ſexes, and may perhaps ſtill gain ground by this early initiation.

SUCH, in general, is the education of female boarding-ſchools; in ſome, indeed, there may be a few other things taught beſides thoſe we have mentioned; but whatever be taught, or however they be conducted, it is too true, that the girl, after having been there ſome years, comes home to her parents quite a modern fine lady; with her head full of ſcraps of French, names of great people, and quotations from romances and plays; and quite diſguſted at the antiquated virtues of ſober frugality, order, or œconomy. We cannot caſt our eyes on the picture we have now drawn, without a ſecret wiſh, that it were leſs juſt; nor ſhall we drop the curtain before it, without mentioning with pleaſure, that ſome parents adopt a better plan; and that ſome young ladies, even thus educated, have had underſtanding enough to lay aſide the greateſt part of the abovementioned frippery, and cultivate ſuch knowledge, and ſuch virtues, as were ornamental to ſociety, and uſeful to themſelves.

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Reflections on it.

SUCH, with a few trifling variations, is the common courſe of European education; a courſe, which ſeems almoſt entirely calculated to cultivate the perſonal graces, while the care of the head, and of the heart, is little, if at all, attended to; and the uſeful duties of domeſtic life, but too often turned into ridicule, as the obſolete employments of ſuch ſilly women as lived a century or two ago, unacquainted with faſhion and with pleaſure. Women ſo educated, may be ſought after to help in trifling away an idle hour; but whatever progreſs their perſonal charms may make on the paſſions, when the hours of trifling and of paſſion are over, they muſt infallibly be neglected, if not deſpiſed. With the fop and the beau, creatures ſtill more inſignificant than themſelves, they may perhaps expect a better fate; but let them conſider, how little pleaſure they generally take in the company and converſation of their own ſex; and that the fop, and the beau, are only women in breeches. Let ſuch alſo, as never entertained an idea but of conqueſts and admirers, conſider, that when youth and beauty ſhall be no more, when the crowd of flatterers and admirers ſhall have ceaſed to attend, ſomething will then be neceſſary to fill up the void, and prevent the peeviſhneſs and diſguſt which it ſo often occaſions; that the natural ſource of this ſomething, is friendſhip; and that friendſhip cannot exiſt, unleſs it is built upon the foundation of reaſon and of ſenſe.

Of the Eaſtern women. how educated.

IF the hiſtory of the education of women in Europe, where they are objects ſo intereſting, and ſo much eſteemed by the men, has given but little pleaſure in the recital, it will give ſtill leſs in Aſia, Africa, and America, where they are commonly either enſlaved or diſregarded: in both which caſes nothing is ſo neceſſary as ignorance; nor would any thing ſo effectually ſpoil them

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for their ſlavery, as education and knowledge; which, by opening and expanding their minds, would ſoon diſcover to them, that our ſex aſſumed a power not founded in nature; and treated them with a ſeverity inconſiſtent with gentleneſs and humanity: for theſe reaſons, it is the intereſt of the men, that almoſt no culture ſhould be beſtowed on their minds, leſt it ſhould teach them to aſſert the rights of nature, and refuſe to ſubmit to the yoke of bondage.

In ſeveral of the warmer regions of Aſia and Africa, where women are conſidered merely as inſtruments of animal pleaſure, the little education beſtowed upon them, is entirely calculated to debauch their minds, and give additional charms to their perſons. They are inſtructed in ſuch graces, and alluring arts, as tend to inflame the paſſions; they are taught vocal and inſtrumental muſic, which they accompany with dances, in which every movement, and every geſture, is expreſſively indecent: but they receive no moral inſtruction; for it would teach them that they were doing wrong: no improvement; for it would ſhew them, that they were degrading themſelves, by being only trained up to ſatisfy the pleaſures of ſenſe. This, however, is not the practice of all parts of Aſia and Africa: the women of Hindoſtan are educated more decently; they are not allowed to learn muſic or dancing; which are only reckoned accompliſhments fit for ladies of pleaſure: they are, notwithſtanding, taught all the perſonal graces; and particular care is taken to inſtruct them in the art of converſing with elegance and vivacity: ſome of them are alſo taught to write, and the generality to read, that they may be able to read the Koran; inſtead of which, they more frequently dedicate themſelves to tales and romances; which, painted in all the

the lively imagery of the East, seldom fail to corrupt the minds of creatures shut up from the world, and consequently forming to themselves extravagant and romantic notions of all that is transacted in it.

In well regulated families, women are taught by heart some prayers in Arabic, which at certain hours they assemble in a hall to repeat; never being allowed the liberty of going to the public mosque. They are enjoined always to wash themselves before praying; and, indeed, the virtues of cleanliness, of chastity, and obedience, are so strongly and constantly inculcated on their minds, that, in spite of their general debauchery of manners, there are not a few among them, who, in their common deportment, do credit to the instructions bestowed upon them; nor is this much to be wondered at, when we consider the tempting recompence that is held out to them; they are, in paradise, to flourish for ever, in the vigour of youth and beauty; and however old, or ugly, when they depart this life, are there to be immediately transformed into all that is fair, and all that is graceful.

In China, where education is in greater esteem than in any part of the world; where it is almost the only road to preferment, and where the men are consequently at the greatest pains to acquire it, we might naturally expect, that as their women possess a considerable share of esteem and regard, they also should not be neglected in their education: but whether they are even taught to read or write their own language, which is a work of many years, we are not informed by any of the voyages and travels which have fallen within our observation; as the task of learning to read or to write the Chinese language is so long and laborious; and as

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among the men it ſeems chiefly confined to ſuch as aſpire after employments of ſtate, we are of opinion, that women are ſeldom or never inſtructed in it. We are told, however, that ſuch as are rich learn muſic, the modes of behaviour, and ceremonial punctilios of the country; which laſt they cannot poſſibly be without; as a failure in the leaſt circumſtance, as the number of bows to a ſuperior, or manner of making them, would infallibly ſtamp the mark of ignorance on the perſon ſo failing: women are in general alſo taught a baſhfulneſs and modeſty of behaviour, not to be met with in any other country: this, however, is too often but a ſemblance; a mere outſide of virtue, which the wearer can occaſionally put on, or ſhake off, as ſhe has occaſion to appear virtuous, or to yield to the temptations of vice.

African women, their education.

SUCH, with very little variation, is the education of women over all Aſia. When we turn towards Africa, we find the men ſtill more brutiſh and ignorant, and the women conſequently more abuſed and neglected. But however ignorant and brutiſh the preſent inhabitants of Africa are, their country was, in the time of the Roman empire, the ſeat of the ſciences, and produced no ſmall number of ſcholars, as well as heroes. The African love of learning was then ſo great, that in Egypt a library was collected; which, for its number of books, equalled almoſt any of our modern times; and, for coſtlineſs, much excelled all that we are now acquainted with; being moſt of them wrote in letters of gold, by diſſolving it in ſome liquid, which, among them, is a peculiar ſecret, and writing with the ſolution as we do with ink. When the Turks made themſelves maſters of Egypt, this famous library was, by ſuperſtition, condemned to the flames; avarice, however, a paſſion much leſs deſtructive, ſaved a part of what ſuperſtition

ſtition had devoted to ruin: the Sultan had ordered all the books to be burned, but ſuch as treated of Mahomediſm; the miniſter, who executed his orders, burned only all that were old and in bad order, ſaving all the new and elegant, which he privately ſold among the officers of the court. Since this period, the faith of Mahomet has ſpread itſelf over the greateſt part of Africa; literature has daily declined, and, at the preſent time, almoſt the whole of its people, of whatever religion, have hardly any veſtige of learning, of arts, or of ſciences left among them. Agriculture is conſigned entirely to the women, and managed in the moſt rude and ſlovenly manner; the few trades and arts practiſed among them, are only the reſult of neceſſity, and carried on with a ſlowneſs and want of invention, which ſtrongly marks their deficiency of genius.

AMONG people, in ſuch a condition, it would be in vain to expect any female learning; all the care that is taken to inſtruct that miſerable ſex, is only in teaching them to bear the load of oppreſſion laid on their ſhoulders by their lazy and imperious maſters, which we ſhall afterward have occaſion to mention; while, from one another, they learn the tawdry modes of dreſſing and ornamenting themſelves as practiſed in their country. This ſlavery of the perſons of women, and total neglect of their minds, naturally excites our indignation; but to account for it, we muſt conſider, that it has been a cuſtom from the earlieſt antiquity in theſe regions; and that cuſtom is ſtronger than reaſon and humanity joined together; that the Africans, and even the Mahomedans in Aſia and in Europe, never make companions of their women, nor aſſociate with them, but in the moments dedicated to love and dalliance; hence the women have no opportunity of

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practiſing upon the men thoſe arts, by which, in other countries, they gain an aſcendancy over the heart, and intereſt even reaſon, as well as humanity, in their favour.

Of the American women.

THE education of the various tribes of ſavages, who inhabit the vaſt continent of America, ſeems in general better adapted to their mode of life than that of Europe; the whole ſcope of it being well calculated to make them patient of every poſſible evil and ſuffering, which may befal them in the courſe of a life deſtined almoſt to one continued ſcene of dangers and fatigues: nor is this plan of education confined to boys only; it is extended to girls alſo, who are taught to bear the rigors of the climate, the fatigues of labour, the cravings of extreme hunger, and other viciſſitudes of fortune, not only with patience, but with reſolution and fortitude. In a great part of North America, it is a fundamental rule in education, never to beat their children of either ſex; which, ſay they, would only weaken and diſpirit their minds, without producing any good effects; and, therefore, whenever a mother ſees her daughter behave ill, inſtead of having recourſe to the rod, ſhe falls a crying; the daughter naturally enquires the cauſe; the mother anſwers, becauſe you diſgrace me; a reproach which ſeldom fails to produce an amendment; but, ſhould it happen otherwiſe, the mother, as a laſt reſource, throws a little water on her face; a diſgrace with which ſhe is commonly ſo much affected, that ſhe ſeldom ventures to do any thing that may ſubject her to a repetition of it.

IN Japan, the ſame gentleneſs muſt be uſed in the education of children; the puniſhments inflicted in moſt other nations, only make them more ſtubborn and refractory; and ſometimes there,

as well as in America, have drove them to commit ſuicide; a crime to which the Japaneſe are addicted on the moſt trifling affront; and which the Americans coolly and deliberately perpetrate, when tired of life. This ſtubbornneſs of temper is not peculiar to Japan, or to America; it ſeems either to depend on ſavageneſs of manners, or perhaps to be peculiar to ſome diſtinct kinds of the human race; as we may find it alſo in Greenland, and ſeveral other places; even where the people have but little reſemblance to each other in manners, cuſtoms, or diſpoſition.

Of all the ancient inhabitants of America, the Peruvians ſeem to have been the moſt enlightened; it has been ſuppoſed, that this was owing to their firſt Inca being an European, accidentally ſhipwrecked on their coaſt. However this be, it is certain, that they greatly ſurpaſſed all their countrymen in arts, in manners, and even in learning; their Virgins of the Sun, in particular, were brought up in the temple dedicated to that luminary, with great care; and inſtructed by women, appointed for the purpoſe, in every female art and accompliſhment known among them; and in the practice of the virtues of chaſtity, honeſty, and benevolence; virtues for which the ancient Peruvians were eminently diſtinguiſhed. In Mexico, alſo, their young women of quality were educated by matrons, who overlooked their conduct with great circumſpection. From theſe inſtances it appears, that in South America, where they enjoy a milder climate, whoſe ſpontaneous productions preclude the neceſſity of procuring ſubſiſtence by the perilous occupations of fiſhing and hunting, their education too, is of a ſofter nature than in North America; where tenderneſs would effectually diſqualify them for bearing the fatigues of their occupation, and the ſeverities of their climate. But

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while the North Americans educate their young women in the hardy manner we have mentioned, they ſeem at the ſame time to blend this education in ſuch a manner, as if they would wiſh to throw into the female compoſition, ſome of that ſoftneſs of manners and perſon, which men in all ages and nations have at leaſt had ſome faint ideas of in the other ſex. While their male children are young, they lay them on the ſkins of panthers, that they may thereby acquire the ſtrength, cunning, and agility of that animal. Their females they lay on the ſkins of fawns, and other mild animals, that, like them, they may become ſoft, gentle, and engaging.

Reflections on the education of women.

WHEN we take a retroſpective view of theſe ſketches of the education of women, it affords matter of aſtoniſhment, that a ſex, who are the ſharers of our nature, and deſtined to be the companions of our lives, ſhould have been conſtantly either ſhamefully neglected, or perverted by what was meant to ſerve as inſtruction. In Europe, their education ſeems only calculated to inſpire them with love of admiration, of trifling, and of amuſement. In moſt other places of the globe, it goes a ſtep farther; it tends to eradicate every moral ſentiment, and introduce vice dreſſed up in the garb of voluptuous refinement. Scarcely has there ever appeared in any period, or in any nation, a legiſlator, who has made it the ſubject of his ſerious attention; and the men in general, who are greatly intereſted, that women ſhould be ſenſible and virtuous, ſeem, by their conduct towards that ſex, to have entered into a conſpiracy to render them otherways.

WHEN ſuch is the hard fate of women, we cannot wonder that the want of literary knowledge has in all ages marked the female

character: there has, however, in all ages, and among all nations, been ſome particular women, who either by being endowed with more genius, or by turning it into another channel, have acquired no incompetent ſhare of the learning of the times in which they lived; thus, though we have already ſeen that the Greek women were in general extremely ignorant, there were ſome exceptions to that common character. Arete, the daughter of Ariſtippus, taught philoſophy, and the ſciences, to her ſon; who, on that account, was called Metrodidactos; i. e. taught by his mother. Corinna, a Theban poeteſs, no leſs than five times bore away the palm in triumph from the celebrated Pindar; and Aſpaſia, a noble Mileſian lady, inſtructed Pericles, the famous Athenian philoſopher. We have already mentioned ſome of the learned Roman ladies. France and England have had a Dacier, a Carter, and many others too tedious to mention. In Italy, where poets, a few centuries ago, were revered as divinities, ſeveral women have arrived at no mean degree of reputation in that art; and our own times have ſeen the ceremony of a poeteſs being ſolemnly crowned with laurel at Rome.

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These particular inſtances, however, have no influence on the women in general. A genius of either ſex, will infallibly ſoar above the common level; but the herd of mankind, who feel not the ſame impulſe, nor are actuated by the ſame fire, will ſtill jog on in the ordinary track; while our warmeſt wiſhes are, that female education were an object more conſidered by the legiſlature, and better planned by parents and guardians. We would not have it underſtood as our opinion, that women ſhould pore out their fair eyes in becoming adepts in literature. Nature ſeems not

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to have intended them for the more intenſe and ſevere ſtudies; beſides, ſhould they proceed ſo far as to rival, or even to equal us in learning, we ſhould perhaps grudge them the laurels of fame, as much as we do the breeches: and the gaining of theſe laurels would rob their brows of many of thoſe charms, which to them are more valuable, as they are by us more eſteemed. We pretend not to chalk out the plan in which women ſhould be educated; only, this we venture to affirm, that it ſhould, if poſſible, be ſuch as to avoid ignorance on the one hand, and pedantry on the other: ignorance makes a female companion contemptible, pedantry makes her ridiculous; nor is it eaſy to ſay which of the two are moſt diſguſting.

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Of the Employments and Amuſements of Women.

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IN every country, where civilization and culture have begun to take place, and where the inhabitants are not obliged to be continually employed in procuring the neceſſaries of life, women are conſidered, not ſo much as the partners of our toil and labour, as the ſweetners of our pleaſures and enjoyments: while we exert ourſelves abroad, in cultivating the fields, carrying on trades, and working at manufactures, we leave them at home to enjoy the fruits of our induſtry; when we return, we lay theſe fruits at their feet, happy ourſelves, if we can contribute to their happineſs.

WOMEN, being thus exempted from the labour of procuring their ſubſiſtence, have a great deal of time upon their hands, which the domeſtic duties that fall to their ſhare are not ſufficient to fill up; ſuch is human nature, eſpecially where the ſpirits are active, and the imagination lively, that time of this kind is of all others the moſt diſagreeable: in order, therefore, to fill up this blank, as well as to vary the ſcene of human life, a variety of little employments, diverſions, and amuſements, have been contrived; many of them adapted to both ſexes, and ſome of them to the fair ſex only.

IN ſtates of the moſt ſavage barbarity, or in theſe but a few degrees removed from it, women being conſidered only as the

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ſlaves and drudges of the men, and as the means of perpetuating their race, are deſtined only to labour in their fields, or in their houſes, and to bring up their children. Thus, conſtantly employed, they have but little time; and conſtantly depreſſed, they have but little inclination for amuſement: in ſuch ſtates and conditions of human nature, we ſhall therefore meet with few female diverſions, and theſe too, only ſuch as ſeem to have ariſen from nature, or from chance, and not from any exertion of genius or refinement in the purſuit of pleaſure.

In the Eaſt, where women are exempted from labour; not becauſe they are eſteemed and regarded, but becauſe it would render them leſs delicate inſtruments of theſe voluptuous pleaſures in which the Eaſterns place their chiefeſt happineſs; they are confined to ſeraglios and harams, where neither their employments nor amuſements can admit of much variety; and where a large portion of their time is conſumed in regret, or ſlumbered away in that ſoft indolence and relaxation of body and mind, which the inhabitants of the banks of the Ganges reckon the higheſt felicity that can be attained in this world, and the chief ingredient in the beatitude of that which is to come.

Diverſions and amuſements, the reſult of idleneſs.

As the neceſſities of nature muſt be ſatisfied before any other appetite can be formed, or object fixed upon, employments muſt therefore have been every where prior to amuſements, which could only come in as ſecondary conſiderations. Accordingly we advance many centuries into the hiſtory of the world, before we have any account of amuſements, and many of the firſt ages of barbarity; the ſubſequent ones of care and ſimplicity, after the firſt foundation of ſtates, generally paſs away, before they have time

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ſime to think of, or inclination to almoſt any diverſion or amuſement. Private and trifling diverſions may ariſe from merrineſs of heart; public ones are only founded on idleneſs and affluence.

Women of antiquity how employed.

In the earlier ages of antiquity, it was not inconſiſtent with the higheſt dignity, to act in what we would reckon the meaneſt of menial employments. Gideon and Arunah aſſiſted in the various labours of huſbandry. Abraham went and brought a calf from the flock, ſkinned it, and gave it to his wife, who dreſſed it: then he himſelf took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dreſſed; ſet them before the angels, and ſtood by them under a tree; a cuſtom to this day continued among many of the eaſtern nations, eſpecially in the Levant; where nothing is more common than to ſee their princes fetch home from their flocks, and kill, whatever they have pitched upon for the uſe of their families; while the princeſſes their wives, or daughters, prepare a fire, and perform the office of an European cook-maid. We ſhall have occaſion to ſee afterward, that ſuch employments were not peculiar to the people, nor to the ages we are conſidering.

Another part of female employment in the earlier ages, was grinding of corn: the ancients had not, and in many countries they ſtill have not, mills ſo conſtructed as to go by wind or water: theirs were only two ſmall ſtones, the uppermoſt of which was turned by the hand, a taſk generally performed by two women. Such were uſed in Egypt in the time of Pharaoh; for Moſes, in the relation of the plagues which infeſted that country on account of the Iſraelites, ſays, that the firſt-born throughout all the land died, from the firſt-born of Pharaoh who was upon the throne, to the firſt-born of the maid-ſervant that was behind the mill. They were uſed in the time of our Saviour, who ſays, "two

"women

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"women ſhall be grinding at the mill; the one ſhall be taken, "and the other left." They are uſed at this day, all over the Levant, and even in the north of Scotland; where the women who turn them, have a particular ſong which they then ſing, intended perhaps to divert them from thinking on the ſeverity of their labour. When the women had grinded the corn into meal, it was likewiſe their province to make it into bread. Sarah was ordered by her huſband, when he entertained the angels, to make cakes for them. Cakes, among many of the ancients, were offered on the altars of their gods, from which cuſtom even the Iſraelites did not altogether abſtain; as the ſcriptures frequently inform us, that their women baked cakes to the Queen of Heaven.

PASTURAGE was almoſt the only method of ſubſiſtence in the times we are ſpeaking of; and the women of every rank and condition, as well as the men, were not exempted from attending on the flocks, drawing water for them to drink, and doing all the other offices which the nature of ſuch an employment required. Paſturage obliged the ancient Iſraelites, and other inhabitants of the Eaſt, to embrace a wandering life, that they might procure freſh food for their flocks. Inſtead, therefore, of dwelling in houſes, as we do, they erected only tents, for the convenience of frequent removals: theſe tents were made of camel's hair and wool, the ſpinning and weaving of which was a part of the occupation of their women; and from the time that cloth was ſubſtituted as a covering for the body, inſtead of the ſkins of animals, the whole operation of making it devolved alſo on the women, who weaved it in the moſt ſimple manner, by conducting the woof with their fingers, inſtead of a ſhuttle.

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In countries where the arts are but in their infancy, every man is generally his own artificer. The men make the various inſtruments which they employ in their work, and the women make the cloth for covering themſelves and their families: but in the days of Moſes, the Iſraelites ſeem to have been advanced a few degrees beyond this ſtate. Metallurgy ſeems to have made a conſiderable progreſs: even in the time of Abraham, they had inſtruments, probably of ſteel, for ſheering their ſheep: Abraham had a ſabre, which he drew to ſacrifice his ſon Iſaac. And they had even arrived to works of taſte in gold and in ſilver: they muſt therefore have been at this period more advanced in the arts, than the Greeks at the time of the ſiege of Troy, whoſe arms and ſhields were only made of copper; or than many ſavage nations at this time, whoſe arms are only hardened wood, ſometimes pointed with flints, or bones of animals.

Amuſements of the women of antiquity but little known.

Such only is the imperfect account we are enabled to give of female employments in the patriarchal ages. Their amuſements and diverſions, if they had any, are ſtill involved in deeper obſcurity. Almoſt in every period, and among every people, however wild and uncultivated, we find ſome rudiments of ſinging and dancing: poems, containing the principal circumſtances of the hiſtory of their country, and the praiſe of their gods and heroes, were in uſe among the ancient Phœnicians, Arabians, Chineſe, Greeks, Mexicans, &c. It is probable, therefore, that the ancient Iſraelitiſh women amuſed themſelves with ſinging the ſongs of their poets; which, among them as well as among their neighbours, were chiefly compoſed either in praiſe of the Deity, to thank him for ſome remarkable deliverance, or to celebrate ſome martial atchievement of themſelves or their anceſtors. And that theſe poems

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were not always compoſed, nor always ſung, by the men only, appears evident from the ſong of Barak and Deborah, handed down to us by Moſes. Jubal, the brother of Tubal Cain, had long before this time invented muſical inſtruments: it is not therefore improbable, that the Iſraelitiſh women accompanied their ſongs with inſtrumental muſic; a cuſtom we often meet with in early ages, and among uncultivated people.

Besides the recital of ſongs and poems, we may reckon dancing among the female diverſions of the times we are reviewing. David danced before the ark of the Lord; and we find old Barzilai bewailing his incapacity for that exerciſe, in a manner that ſhewed how much it was the favourite, and perhaps the religious, diverſion of the times in which he lived. As women are generally at all times, and particularly while in the bloom of youth and beauty, more cheerful, light-hearted, and given to the ſportive amuſements, than men; it is highly probable, that they did not ſit inactive ſpectators of a diverſion ſo much in uſe: and on ſome feſtival occaſions, eſpecially ſheep-ſheering, we have the ſtrongeſt reaſons to believe, that there were promiſcuous meetings, where both ſexes rejoiced, made merry, and perhaps danced together. Dancing is perhaps not leſs ancient than ſongs, nor leſs practiſed by ſavage nations, over whom muſic has commonly a power, to which even the moſt delicate Italian ear is a ſtranger. It elevates them to extacy, and often prompts them to exert themſelves till they fall down breathleſs. Even the wretches who, in America, ſmart under the rod of European ſlavery, though ſo diſpirited, as in appearance to have bid an eternal farewell to happineſs and pleaſure, ſtart up at the power of muſic, and dance as if their bodies were ſtrangers to pain, and their hearts to ſorrow.

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Theatrical entertainments and games of chance not known.

In the times we are conſidering, games of chance were not known; and even in the days of Solomon, who with an unheard-of degree of magnificence and libertiniſm had indulged himſelf in every vanity, and in every delight, neither games nor theatrical entertainments ſeem to have been introduced. If we may credit the commentators on the Talmud, all kinds of games and ſpectacles were not only forbid, but abhorred by every good Iſraelite, on account of the judgments which had fallen upon ſuch as had ventured to be preſent at them among the neighbouring nations. The comment on the book of Ruth introduces old Naomi diſſuading her daughter-in-law from returning into the land of Iſrael, becauſe women were not there allowed to go to the theatres, as among the Gentiles. The Jewiſh comment on the Lamentations of Jeremiah, introduces the church of that people expoſtulating with God, that ſhe had never indulged herſelf in entering into ſuch prophane places; and the Talmud itſelf expreſsly forbids, that they ſhould enter them on any conſideration whatever.

On this, and ſome other accounts, it would ſeem, that the amuſements of the women, in the times we are ſpeaking of, were but few and ſimple. Perhaps one of the moſt common was, regaling themſelves in the open air, as the ſcripture expreſſes it, "every one under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree;" a cuſtom as ancient as Abraham, and at this day almoſt the only amuſement practiſed in the Eaſt; where the heat of the climate diſpoſes more to relaxation in the ſhade, than to the ſportive diverſions uſed by the active inhabitants of colder regions.

We are informed by Herodotus, that in Egypt the employments of the women, like moſt of the other cuſtoms of that people,

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were totally different from what they were in other countries. We have already mentioned, that the Egyptian women were occupied abroad in trade, merchandife, and agriculture; and we now add, that, according to this author, they left all the domeftic employments and cares to their men. We are, however, rather of opinion, that this was not ftrictly the cafe: the mercantile caravans, which travelled in places fo rude and unhofpitable as the neighbourhood of Egypt, were probably not compofed of women; the fine linen, for which Egypt was fo remarkable, was probably not fpun by men, who feem by nature to have an abhorrence at the diftaff. But as the divifion of the employments of life between the two fexes, in this country, is by the difagreement of authors involved in fo much doubt and obfcurity, at a period fo diftant, we cannot pretend to throw any light upon the fubject.

Egyptian women, their amufements.

FROM the faint glimmerings of ancient hiftory it would feem, that the public amufements and diverfions of the Egyptians were only a kind of religious feftivals, which they celebrated with finging, dancing, feafting, and pompous proceffions; in which the women bore a great part, and being adorned with a variety of flowers and garlands, carried in their hands things fymbolical of the feftival they were celebrating. Befides the joining in thefe public proceffions, women of diftinction ufed to keep their birth-days with feafting and rejoicing. On the birth-day of a queen, or of a daughter of Egypt, the whole court was treated in a magnificent manner, and paid their compliments to the lady on whofe account they were aflembled. Great men followed the example of their prince, called together their friends and dependents, and fpent the birth-days of their wives and daughters in mirth and feftivity. With regard to the private amufements of the Egyp-

tian

tian women, hiſtory is entirely ſilent. It is probable, however, that among a people ſo highly cultivated, they were not altogether without ſome of theſe ſportive diverſions, which tend to invigorate the body by unbending the mind.

Employments of the women of ſome other nations.

FROM the Egyptians till we come to the heroic ages, we only meet with a few ſcattered hints concerning the manner in which women employed or amuſed themſelves. The Phœnician women, whoſe huſbands were famous for trade and navigation, are ſaid to have ſpent much of their time in writing and keeping of theſe accounts, without which trade cannot be properly managed. The Lybian women, warlike as their huſbands, dedicated a great part of their time to feats of arms, and to the chace: even their amuſements were ſome of them calculated to inſtil a martial ſpirit: one tribe, in their country, annually celebrated a feſtival in honour of Minerva, in which the young women divided into two parties, and fought with ſticks and ſtones, till one of the parties was defeated. As this annual conflict was fought in honour of the goddeſs, they imagined that all the wounds received in it were under her peculiar care; and that ſhe intereſted herſelf ſo much in their cure, that ſhe ſuffered none to die of them, but ſuch as had forfeited their title to her favour by the loſs of their virginity. It is probable, that theſe wounds were ſeldom of conſequence enough to become mortal; and when they were, it was eaſy to fix this ſtigma of female levity on the unhappy ſufferer, who could not riſe from the dead to vindicate her injured reputation. Thus, though we can conſider the inſtitution in no other light than a piece of ſtate policy, it was excellently calculated to preſerve chaſtity: not to join in the engagement was a tacit acknowledgment of unchaſtity; to be wounded in it, was conſidered as cer-

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tain death to her who was ſo. Few women, therefore, would riſque themſelves, who were conſcious of being guilty; few women would dare to be guilty, when it was reckoned ſo impoſſible to avoid a diſcovery.

In what manner the women of the Syrians, Babylonians, Medes, and Perſians, who are almoſt the only nations which make any figure in the periods we are reviewing, were employed, is nearly all conjecture. We may, however, venture to affirm, that among the opulent they were not put to any ſervile or laborious taſks; as ſuch would have been altogether inconſiſtent with the delicacy in which they were brought up, and the extraordinary finery with which they were decorated. As the Babylonians were famous for their manufactures of rich embroidery, ſumptuous veſtments, fine linen, magnificent carpets and hangings; and as weaving, embroidery, and other works of the like nature, were a principal part of the occupation of women, in the periods we are conſidering, we may reaſonably conjecture, that they were employed in fabricating of theſe, as well as in preparing that finery with which they ornamented their perſons. We have reaſon alſo to ſuppoſe, that in nations ſo rich and luxurious as thoſe we have mentioned, where women were brought up in the lap of eaſe and indulgence, they would have ſeveral public as well as private amuſements; but what theſe were, or how conducted, it is in vain for us at this period to attempt to diſcover. We are informed, that the Babylonians had a great variety of muſical inſtruments; and as muſic is a recreation well adapted to the ſentimental feelings of the female heart, it is probable, their women did not neglect it. The Medes and Perſians were alſo famous for muſic and dancing. Muſic, among them, was called in to heighten

the pleaſure of the feſtive board; at which they ſung, and played upon inſtruments, the monarchs themſelves ſometimes taking a part in this, as well as in every other thing which promoted mirth and jollity. We are inclined to believe, that it was among the Medes and Perſians that the cuſtom was firſt introduced of bringing in ſinging and dancing women, in order to divert a company.

Of ſubſequent periods.

AMONG the nations which have been hitherto mentioned, we could do little more than obſerve in general, that ſuch was the employment, and ſuch the amuſement of the fair ſex. Deſcending to periods leſs remote, we meet with deſcriptions more particular. In the Leſſer Aſia, where it would ſeem that women were far from being ſo much deſpiſed and neglected, as in many other parts of the world, even thoſe of the firſt quality were not aſhamed to perform the office of a waſherwoman. We ſhall afterwards have occaſion to take notice of the ſame cuſtom in Greece. The Grecian wives and daughters, of whatever quality, were not, in the heroic ages, brought up in idleneſs. Penelope, queen of the famous Ulyſſes, is ſo frequently introduced by Homer at her loom, that almoſt every one has heard the ſtory of Penelope's web; a ſtory which has been frequently applied to the ſlow and thriftleſs operations of the women of our modern times. The famous Helen, while confined by the beſiegers of Troy, employed herſelf in an extraordinary piece of embroidery, which repreſented moſt of the battles fought between the Greeks and Trojans: and Andromache, when ſhe heard of the death of Hector, embroidered a repreſentation of that tragical ſcene, and adorned it with flowers. But ſuch ſoft employments, ſuch works of taſte, were not the ſole occupations of the women in the times we are delineating. The ſame Andromache, who with her needle painted the fall of the

hero,

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hero of her country, was not aſhamed to feed, and take care of the horſes of that hero when living.

Beſides the arts of weaving and embroidery, which were not unknown to the women in the times of Moſes, the Grecian fair ones employed themſelves in ſpinning, which they performed ſtanding, and in every other branch of the manufacture of cloth; a cuſtom which was not obliterated even in the moſt poliſhed times of their ſtates. Alexander the Great, and many others of their heroes and ſtateſmen, wore garments, ſpun and woven by their wives and ſiſters: and this appears to have been the practice of the earlieſt antiquity, as we find Solomon, in his praiſes of a virtuous woman, enumerating, among her other qualities, that of clothing her huſband in purple and ſcarlet. The Greek women had particular rooms allotted to their work, near the apartments where they lodged. When they were reſpected by their huſbands, and not given to intriguing, the proviſion and management of all neceſſaries within doors were committed to them.

Of the Greek women.

As the Greek ladies were almoſt conſtantly employed, and as voluntary employment often baniſhes even every wiſh of pleaſure and diſſipation, we have reaſon to believe that they had few, if any, private diverſions or amuſements; which are generally the offspring of idleneſs, as appears plainly from the difference, in this reſpect, between the women and the men; the former, as we have obſerved, being fully employed, had no need of amuſements; the latter being frequently, and, in Sparta, even by law obliged to be conſtantly idle, were thereby induced to have recourſe to games and ſports of various kinds to fill up their vacant hours, and prevent that uncomfortable tedium which ſo conſtantly at-

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tends idleneſs: to ſome of theſe public ſports the women were admitted, and from others excluded by the ſevereſt penalties. Their legiſlator poſſibly imagined, that ſhould they be indiſcriminately admitted to all the amuſements of the men, they would acquire an unſuitable boldneſs, and neglect the ſeveral duties and offices required of them at home. To what we have here obſerved the Spartan women are, however, an objection: we have already ſeen, that they amuſed themſelves with the maſculine exerciſes of wreſtling, throwing darts, &c. But this is not all: they were obliged to appear naked at ſome of their ſolemn feaſts and ſacrifices, and to dance and ſing, while the young men ſtood in a circle around them; an amuſement highly indelicate, or, if a religious ceremony, only worthy of the Cyprian goddeſs.

In the earlier periods, while the Greeks found abundance of employment in procuring ſubſiſtence, in plundering their neighbours, or avenging their own quarrels; they had but few gods, and, hardly, perhaps, any feſtivals beſides that of the vintage, when they uſed to make merry together with the fruits they had gathered. In the latter, when they became idle, by devolving all their labour upon ſlaves, and their gods had increaſed almoſt to the number of their men, the feſtivals celebrated in honour of them became alſo nearly innumerable, and were many of them accompanied with dancings, revellings, pompous proceſſions, and other oſtentatious ceremonies: into almoſt all of them the women were not only admitted, but in ſeveral of them acted a principal part, as ſingers, dancers, prieſteſſes, &c. When, therefore, the inſtitutions of a religion are in this manner more calculated to attract the eye, than to amend the heart; when, inſtead of ſocial and moral duties, they preſcribe gaudy proceſſions, and oſtentatious,

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tious ceremonies; theſe in a great meaſure ſupply, and are actually turned into public diverſions and amuſements. This ſeems to have been remarkably the caſe in Greece; where, though every one of their numerous feſtivals was inſtituted in honour of ſome god, or in commemoration of ſomething which they fancied was connected with religion, they often loſt ſight of the original inſtitution amid the glare of oſtentatious ceremony with which it was celebrated.

ANOTHER cauſe, which contributed to make the religious feſtivals of the Greeks be conſidered as amuſements and diverſions, was that ridiculous buffoonery which conſtituted ſo great a part of them: it would be tedious to enumerate one half of theſe buffooneries; let a few ſerve as a ſpecimen. At a feſtival held in honour of Bacchus, the women ran about for a long time ſeeking the god, who, they pretended, had run away from them: this done, they paſſed their time in propoſing riddles and queſtions to each other, and laughing at ſuch as could not anſwer them; and at laſt often cloſed the ſcene with ſuch enormous exceſſes, that at one of theſe feſtivals, the daughters of Minya, having in their madneſs killed Hippaſus, had him dreſſed and ſerved up to table as a rarity. At another, kept in honour of Venus and Adonis, they beat their breaſts, tore their hair, and mimicked all the ſigns of the moſt extravagant grief, with which they ſuppoſed the goddeſs to have been affected on the death of her favourite paramour. At another, in honour of the nymph Cotys, they addreſſed her as the goddeſs of wantonneſs with many myſterious rites and ceremonies. At Corinth, theſe rites and ceremonies, being perhaps thought inconſiſtent with the character of modeſt women, this feſtival was only celebrated by harlots. Athenæus mentions a feſtival,

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festival, at which the women laid hold on all the old bachelors they could find, and dragged them round an altar; beating them all the time with their fists, as punishment for their neglect of the sex. We shall only mention two more; at one of which, after the assembly had met in the temple of Ceres, the women shut out all the men and dogs, themselves and the bitches remaining in the temple all night: in the morning, the men were let in, and the time was spent in laughing together at the frolic. At the other, in honour of Bacchus, they counterfeited frenzy and madness; and to make this madness appear the more real, they used to eat the raw and bloody entrails of goats newly slaughtered. And, indeed, the whole of the festivals of Bacchus, a deity much worshipped in Greece, were celebrated with rites either ridiculous, obscene, or madly extravagant. There were others, however, in honour of the other gods and goddesses, which were more decent, and had more the appearance of religious solemnity, though even in these, the women dressed out in all their finery; and adorned with flowers and garlands, either formed splendid processions, or assisted in performing ceremonies; the general tendency of which was to amuse rather than instruct.

Roman women, how employed.

WHEREVER women are advanced a few degrees above the most abject slavery, nothing is more natural to them than a constant endeavour to attract the attention of our sex, by a display of their native charms, set off to the best advantage by dress and ornament. But it is only in states polished to excess, that they have imagined, that to dress, to ornament themselves, and display all their charms, are the only things with which they have any business or concern in this world. Such, as we have now seen, were not the ancient Greeks, nor such were the Romans in the early periods of their

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empire. Tanaquil, the queen of Tarquin, one of the firſt and beſt kings of Rome, was admitted to public honours on account of the uſe ſhe had made of her diſtaff; and Lucretia, whoſe tragical ſtory is ſo well known in the Roman hiſtory, when her huſband and ſome friends with him, unexpectedly arrived from the army in the middle of the night, was found with her maids ſpinning and working in wool; and the general practice of this period, as well among the Romans as the Greeks and other nations, was, that the women manufactured all the cloaths uſed by their huſbands and families; not thinking the uſeful and neceſſary arts of life ſo incompatible with elegance and grandeur as they began to do afterwards, and as they unfortunately do ſtill in our modern times: but while their huſbands and relations were labouring for, or defending them abroad, they at home were providing them with cloaths and other neceſſaries, according to their rank, and the faſhion of their country, and thus mutually forwarding one common intereſt; but in ſubſequent periods, when luxury, with its numerous train of attending evils, had crept into Rome, the women became by degrees leſs uſeful, and ceaſed to be employed in proportion as they were diverted and amuſed.

HISTORY, ſo far as we know, has not acquainted us, whether the Roman ladies had any private diverſions: their public ones were ſuch as were common to both ſexes; as bathing, theatrical repreſentations, horſe-races, ſhows of wild beaſts, fighting with one another; and ſometimes with men, whom the emperors in the plenitude of their deſpotic power ordered to engage them; naval battles, and gladiators hacking one another to pieces. The Romans, of both ſexes, ſpent a great deal of time at the baths; which at firſt, perhaps, were interwoven with their religion, at laſt,

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laſt, were only conſidered as refinements in luxury; they were places of public reſort, where all the news of the times were to be heard, where people met with their acquaintances and friends, where public libraries were kept for ſuch as choſe to read, and where poets recited their works to ſuch as would hear. In the earlier periods of Rome, ſeparate baths were appropriated to each ſex; but luxury beginning by degrees to thruſt out decency, they at laſt came to bathe promiſcuouſly together; the men, however, being dreſſed and undreſſed by the men; and the women, following the example, by thoſe of their own ſex alſo. The emperor Adrian prohibited this indecent manner of bathing, and re-eſtabliſhed the ſeparate baths; inclination, by degrees, overcame the prohibition, and Marcus Aurelius renewed it. Heliogabalus, the patron of gluttony and indecorum, formally aboliſhed it; and it was again renewed under Alexander Severus. But debauchery was by this time become too powerful to be reſtrained by law; and in ſpite of every effort, promiſcuous bathing continued till the time of Conſtantine; who finally annulled it, by adding the precepts of Chriſtianity to the legiſlative authority. There were likewiſe at Rome public walks, planted on each ſide with rows of trees, as in modern times; to which both ſexes reſorted in the evenings, to walk and amuſe themſelves. The emperors ſometimes alſo gave lotteries; in which the women had tickets, that entitled them to prizes. In ſhort, ſo much did the Roman women recede from the cuſtom of antiquity, in mixing themſelves with the men, that at laſt there was hardly an amuſement, a buſineſs, or debauchery, in which they were not engaged, either as parties or ſpectators.

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The ſame Subject continued.

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MEN, though in many reſpects exactly ſimilar in all ages and countries, in others are ſo diſſimilar, that they can hardly be conſidered as the ſame kind of beings; their ſimilarity is in all times and places the effect of nature; their diſſimilarity the effect of art, and of the habits and cuſtoms which have ariſen from it. Theſe every where govern and direct more than one half of their thoughts and actions, lay them under obligations ſtronger than the laws of their country; and in many caſes obliterate even the laws of nature. Such was the caſe with the Roman women at the public baths; ſuch is the caſe at preſent in Ruſſia, and many other parts of the world; where female modeſty not only gives place to cuſtom, but, by cuſtom, is in time entirely eradicated.

As the other articles, which we mentioned in the liſt of diverſions and amuſements of the Roman ladies, are already ſo well known, we ſhall not enter into a particular detail of them. When from the Romans we turn our eyes towards theſe nations, who afterwards overturned their empire, we find them, though by the Romans denominated barbarians, in many circumſtances, leſs deſerving of that contemptible epithet than theſe inſolent depopulators of the world. We find their women placing no ſmall ſhare of female excellence in the exerciſe of the domeſtic, and ſtill more in that of the conjugal virtues: we find that their mothers had early inſtilled

ſtilled into their minds that modeſty, which more than any ornaments adorned; and that frugality and induſtry, which in a barren climate, and almoſt unaſſiſted by the men, maintained them. Their employment was not only to take care of, and manage all the domeſtic concerns of the family, but alſo to provide whatever could be obtained by peaceful induſtry; for their huſbands, inclined only to occupy themſelves in war and hunting, left every thing elſe to the conduct and direction of their wives.

THE Celtes, Gauls, Germans, and perhaps every other northern people, deemed agriculture an ignoble profeſſion; only fit for ſlaves and women: even the Viſigoths, on the coaſts of Spain, devolved the care of their flocks and their fields on their women, and encouraged them to ſupport the fatigue of managing them, by eſtabliſhing annual aſſemblies, in which thoſe women who had moſt diſtinguiſhed themſelves in agriculture received public applauſe. The men, in all the nations we have mentioned, counted it only glorious to live by the ſword and the bow, and conſequently, when not engaged in war, or in the chaſe, ſunk into ſlothful indolence; and could only be ſaid to live, becauſe they ate, drank, and ſlept. Every neceſſary work being thus left to the women, they were perhaps ſo fully employed as to have no time for any thing elſe; if they had any diverſions or amuſements, as they had no hiſtorians, and as thoſe of other nations were but imperfectly acquainted with their manners, we have no account of them.

Eaſtern women, how employed.

WE ſhall afterwards have occaſion to relate, that the far greater part of the female ſex in Aſia, Africa, and America, are in a ſtate of the moſt abject ſlavery, and employed only in the execution of

every

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every ſlaviſh and laborious taſk. We ſhall not therefore now take up the diſmal tale, but content ourſelves with mentioning a few particulars only, and theſe chiefly ſuch as relate to women, who are the leaſt expoſed to feel the oppreſſive effects of deſpotiſm. The Hindoo women, the Mahommedans of Bengal, Naugaracut, Lahor, and ſeveral other places of the Eaſt, are, in general, not ſo much oppreſſed by ſlavery, as in many parts of Africa and America; becauſe, in the former places, they are conſidered only as an article of delicacy and pleaſure; in the latter, only as the ſlaves of their lords, and the breeders of children. To the women of Hindoſtan, we owe a great part of theſe works of taſte ſo elegantly executed on the manufactures of the Eaſt; the beautiful colourings and exquiſite deſignings of their printed cottons; all the embroidery, and a part of that filligree work, which ſo much exceeds any thing in Europe. The deficiency of taſte therefore, with which we ſo commonly charge them, does not ſeem to be ſo much a defect of nature as of education: brought up in luxurious indolence, excluded from all the buſy ſcenes of life, and like children provided with all thoſe things, the acquiſition of which calls forth the powers of the mind and body, they ſeldom have any motive to exert themſelves; but when ſuch a motive exiſts, they have often exhibited the moſt convincing proofs of their ability. Mherul-Niſſa, who was afterward the favourite Sultana of Jehangire, emperor of Hindoſtan, being, with ſeveral female ſlaves, at firſt ſhut up in a deſpicable apartment of the ſeraglio, on the comfortleſs allowance of two ſhillings per day, in order to raiſe her own reputation, and to ſupport herſelf and ſlaves in a better manner than that ſcanty pittance would admit of, began to call forth the powers of taſte and invention, which had hitherto lain dormant: ſhe produced ſome admirable pieces of tapeſtry and embroidery,

painted ſilks, with the moſt exquiſite delicacy; and invented a variety of female ornaments, ſuperior to thoſe in common uſe; theſe being bought up with avidity over all the city of Delhi, made her ſo famous, that the Sultan paid her a viſit; and captivated with her ſenſe and her charms, from that moment became her ſlave. CHAP. IV.

Such are the female employments of the Eaſt; they are nearly the ſame among the Turks now ſettled in Europe; every Turkiſh ſeraglio or haram has a garden adjoining to it, and in the middle of this garden a large room, more or leſs decorated, according to the wealth of the proprietor; here the ladies ſpend moſt of their time with their attendant nymphs around them, employed at their muſic, embroidery, or loom; nor ſhould we wonder, if in theſe retreats they find more real pleaſure and enjoyment, than in the unbounded freedom of Europe, where love, intereſt, and ambition, ſo often deſtroy their peace; and where ſcandal, with her envenomed ſhafts, too often ſtrikes equally at guilt and innocence.

Luxurious amuſements.

So little do the writers of voyages and travellers know what paſſes in the penetralia of the harams of the Eaſt, and ſo private are theſe receſſes kept even from the eye of ſpeculative intruſion, that our knowledge of what is going forward within them is exceedingly imperfect: this only in general ſeems certain, that the ladies of the great, ſpend their time lolling on ſilken ſophas, bathing in roſe water, perfuming themſelves with coſtly eſſences, and adorning their perſons, ſolicitous by every method to attract the attention, and obtain the greateſt ſhare of the conjugal favour of their lord. Public amuſements they have none; as theſe would neceſſarily

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neceſſarily expoſe them to be ſeen; a thing which, through cuſtom, the women themſelves ſeem little leſs afraid of than the jealous tyrants who confine them.

In the empire of the Mogul, the women are often called into the apartments of the men after ſupper, where they ſpend the remainder of the evening in regaling themſelves with betel *, with a few of the liquors of the country, and in converſation; but in theſe caſes they are conſtantly veiled; and to offer to unveil, or even to touch one of them, would be conſidered as the greateſt rudeneſs; and perhaps puniſhed with immediate ſtabbing. At court they are frequently admitted into a gallery, with a curtain before them, through which, without being ſeen, they can ſee and hear whatever paſſes. It has ſometimes happened, that the throne has been occupied by a woman, who never appearing in open court, iſſued her imperial mandates from behind this curtain; like an inviſible being producing the greateſt effects, while the cauſe of them was wrapt in darkneſs and obſcurity.

Dancing, an amuſement in many places.

At Conſtantinople, where the inhabitants ſtill retain the manners of the Aſiatics, and in moſt places of the Levant, the Turks, who love indolent amuſements, chuſe out in the evening a green ſpot, in ſome thick ſhade, in which they ſpread a carpet; and ſitting down croſs-legged together, men and women upon it, divert themſelves with drinking coffee and ſherbet, while their female ſlaves attend round them to play, ſing, or dance, as they ſhall direct; the miſtreſs, or lady, of the firſt quality in the party, often leading the dance, in the ſame manner as Diana is ſaid to

* Betel is a root, which the Eaſterns make uſe of as the Europeans do tobacco; it is chewed by all ranks, and by men, women, and children.

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have done with her Nymphs on the banks of the Eurotas. But though women of rank, at Conſtantinople, may lead off a dance, ſuch does not ſeem to be the general practice of the Aſiatics, from whom they are deſcended; at leaſt, they do not dance for amuſement; it is true, the Mogul emperors often make their wives and concubines dance before them, and the other great men imitate their example; but this is not a voluntary act of the women; it is what they are obliged to by the command of a ſuperior; and when this ſuperior retires, they exerciſe the ſame authority over their own ſlaves, who are alſo obliged to dance for their amuſement. We have already ſeen, in the beginning of this chapter, that dancing was practiſed in an early period in the Eaſt; and we find that it ſtill prevails among all nations, rude and cultivated; only with this difference, that the rude dance to ſhew their ſtrength and agility; the cultivated for exerciſe, and to ſhew the gracefulneſs of their perſons and motions; and ſo much are mankind almoſt every where delighted with dancing, that the indigent in many places have converted it into a trade, from which they derive no uncomfortable ſubſiſtence.

In the neighbourhood of Surat, the Hindoos have many magnificent temples; and in every temple are a number of Bramins or prieſts, dedicated to the ſervice of the god there worſhipped. A part of that ſervice conſiſts in dancing on religious aſſemblies, and other ſolemn occaſions; and theſe dances are performed by young women, the moſt handſome and beautiful in the country *. Theſe reſide in the temple, and are by the Bramins carefully col-

* When Mamood firſt took the magnificent temple of Sumnat, he found there five hundred dancing girls, and three hundred muſicians.

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lected from every place, where their own influence, or the veneration of their temple reaches. In order to induce them to enter into this ſervice, beſides the immenſe rewards held out to them in the world to come, they have ſome peculiar privileges in this. They may leave the temple when they pleaſe; and being accounted holy, they are then eagerly ſought after in marriage, and have the preference in this reſpect to all other women. While in the temples, they are entirely under the direction of the Bramins; and it is by many ſuppoſed, that they are alſo entirely appropriated to their pleaſures; but however this be, they are hardly ever allowed, like the other female dancers of the country, to perform for the amuſement of the public.

Dancing girls, their deſcription.

BESIDES theſe religious dancers, there is almoſt in every large city, companies of dancing girls, called Balliaderes; who, in the manner of our ſtrolling players, go about for the amuſement of the public; and who will exhibit their performances at the houſe of any perſon, who is able to pay what they demand; or may be ſeen by any one for a trifle at their public aſſemblies. Theſe beautiful girls are conſtantly followed by an old deformed muſician, who beats time with a brazen inſtrument, called a Tom; and continually at every ſtroke repeats the word Tom with ſuch vociferation, that he ſoon works himſelf into a kind of phrenzy; the Balliaderes, at the ſame time eager to pleaſe, and intoxicated with the muſic, and the ſmell of the eſſences with which they are perfumed, ſoon after begin to be in the ſame ſtate: their dances are in general expreſſive of the paſſion of love, and they manage them ſo as to give, even the moſt ignorant, tolerable ideas of that paſſion in all its different ſituations and circumſtances; and ſo great

great is their beauty, ſo voluptuous their figure, ſo rich and ingeniouſly contrived their dreſs, that they ſeldom perform without drawing together a numerous croud of ſpectators.

STROLLING female dancers, who live by that profeſſion, are not, however, peculiar to the Eaſt Indies; they have of late been met with in Otaheite, and ſeveral other places; but beſides their ſtrolling dancers in Otaheite, they have a dance called Timoradee, which the young girls perform, whenever eight or ten of them can be got together; it conſiſts in every motion, geſture, and tone of voice that is truly laſcivious; and being brought up to it from their childhood, in every motion, and in every geſture, they keep time with an exactneſs ſcarcely excelled by the moſt expert ſtage-dancers of Europe. But though this diverſion is allowed to the virgin, it is prohibited to the wife; who, from the moment of marriage, muſt abſtain from it for ever.

THAT ſuch women as have rather been the outcaſts of fortune, and are conſequently obliged to exert themſelves, in order to gain a ſubſiſtence, ſhould make dancing a profeſſion, and exhibit their performances for money, has nothing in it extraordinary; but that both men and women, who reckon themſelves ſo far above want, as to be aſhamed to perform for hire, ſhould become ſtrolling dancers from choice, in ſome degree excites our aſtoniſhment, as being perfectly inconſiſtent with the ideas which we entertain in Europe. Such, however, in the iſland of Ulietea, were met with by Mr. Banks and Dr. Solander, who have given the following deſcription of them: "In the courſe of our walk, we met "with a company of ſtrolling dancers, who detained us two hours; "and during all that time afforded us great entertainment; the

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" company conſiſted of two women dancers, and ſix men, with " three drums: they were ſome of the moſt conſiderable people of " the iſland; and though they were continually going from place " to place, they did not, like the ſtrolling companies of Otaheite, " take any gratuity from the ſpectators. The women had upon " their heads a conſiderable quantity of plaited hair, which was " brought ſeveral times round their head, and adorned in many " parts with the flowers of the Cape Jeſſamine, which were ſtuck " in with much taſte, and made a head-dreſs truly elegant; their " necks, ſhoulders, and arms, were naked; ſo were their breaſts, " as low as the parting of the arm; below that they were covered " with black cloth, which ſat cloſe to the body; at the ſide of each " breaſt, next the arm, was placed a ſmall plume of black feathers; " upon their hips reſted a quantity of cloth, plaited very full; " it reached up to the breaſt, and fell down below into long " petticoats; theſe quite concealed their feet; which they ma- " naged with as much dexterity as our opera-dancers could have " done; the plaits above the waiſt were brown and white alter- " nately, the petticoats below were all white.

" In this dreſs they advanced ſideways, in a meaſured ſtep, " keeping excellent time to the drums, which beat briſkly and " loud; ſoon after they began to ſhake their hips, giving the " folds of cloth that lay upon them a very quick motion, which " was in ſome degree continued through the whole dance; though " the body was thrown into various poſtures, ſometimes ſtanding, " ſometimes ſitting, and ſometimes reſting on their knees and " elbows; the fingers alſo being moved, at the ſame time, with a " quickneſs ſcarcely to be imagined. Much of the dexterity of " the dancers, however, and the entertainment of the ſpectators,

" conſiſted

"conſiſted in the wantonneſs of their attitudes, and geſtures; "which was indeed ſuch as exceeds all deſcription."

Thoughts on dancing.

From the earlieſt ages, dancing appears to have been either a religious or an imitative exerciſe; David danced before the ark of the Lord, the Philiſtines danced before Dagon, many of the contemporary nations frequently danced at their ſolemn meetings, in their groves, and on their high places; the Greeks did the ſame at ſome of the feſtivals celebrated in honour of their gods; and the travellers of our own times give us numberleſs accounts of the dancings of the ſavages before their idols. So different, however, are the ideas we have formed of religion, that we are apt to conſider dancing as altogether inconſiſtent with its ſolemnity; but, perhaps, thoſe who thought otherwiſe, introduced it as a ſign of gratitude and thankfulneſs, for health, vigour, and agility; and, to ſhow the gods, that they were cheerful and happy in the enjoyment of their bleſſings, and under the adminiſtration of their government; and proceeding from ſuch ſentiments in the worſhippers, it could not be to the gods an unacceptable ſervice. It has likewiſe been much uſed in an imitative or ſymbolical manner. The Indians dance their war-dance, to ſhew the ſtrength, the agility, and ferocity they can exert in battle; and the women we have mentioned indecently dance, what may be called their love-dance, to ſhew how well they are qualified for the rapturous enjoyments of that paſſion; and it is only in the polite countries of Europe that we dance purely for the ſake of dancing. If rude and barbarous nations make their dances expreſſive of their employments and their feelings; it is worth conſidering, whether we might not improve on the plan,

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and add ſentiment and expreſſion to what we at preſent only look upon as frolic and amuſement.

Bathing, an amuſement in the Eaſt.

BESIDES dancing, which does not as in Europe ſeem an amuſement voluntarily practiſed by all ranks and conditions of women; in the Eaſt they have the diverſion of bathing, which is ſo cloſely interwoven with their religion as well as with their paſtime, that we can hardly ſay to which of them it belongs. In warm countries, where cleanlineſs is ſo abſolutely neceſſary to the health and ſweetneſs of the body, as almoſt to deſerve a place among the moral virtues; there is ſcarcely a religious ſyſtem into which frequent bathing has not been introduced, as a ceremony without which the gods would not accept the prayers and ſacrifices of men, and hence both ſexes are more accuſtomed to bathe than among us, who by religion are not enjoined any ſuch duty. But there are in the Eaſt other cauſes, which perhaps even more forcibly prompt to the uſe of the bath than religion itſelf. The firſt is inclination, which muſt operate in the ſtrongeſt manner in climates ſcorched by a vertical ſun; to give us ſome idea of the ſtrength of this inclination in ſuch climates, we need only reflect on what we ſometimes feel in the ſcorching ſummer months on entering into a cool ſhade, or viewing a pool of water; the ſecond is the love of liberty, every bathing-place ſet apart for the uſe of the women is a kind of public rendezvous, where the ſex in general meet to talk over the news, the ſcandal, and the faſhions; it is a ſacred aſylum, where no man dare enter, and where women are conſequently free from the tyranny of their huſbands and guardians; and beſides, in going to and coming from it, they ſometimes manage ſo as to be ſeen by their lovers, or make an

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assignation with their gallants: on all these accounts, we are not to wonder that bathing is so much practised in the East; and especially by the fair sex, who have hardly any other liberty than that which they enjoy on this occasion.

We have already mentioned the indecent manner in which the Romans of both sexes bathed promiscuously together; the Greeks in the heroic ages did the same, with this difference only, that the places they used were not so confined, being commonly some river, or the sea itself. To the indelicacy of these two nations, so famous in history, we shall oppose the practice of the Turkish Ladies at Adrianople, as related by lady Mary Wortley Montague. "I went, says she, to the bagnio about "ten o'clock; it was already full of women, I was in my "travelling habit, which is a riding-dress, and certainly ap-"peared very extraordinary to them, yet there was not one of "them that shewed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity, "but received me with all the obliging civility possible. I know "no European court where the ladies would have behaved "themselves in so polite a manner to such a stranger: I believe "there were two hundred women, and yet none of those dis-"dainful smiles and satirical whispers that never fail in our "assemblies, when any body appears that is not dressed exactly in "the fashion; they repeated over and over to me, charming, "very charming; the first sophas were covered with cushions and "rich carpets, on which sat the ladies, and on the second their "slaves, behind them, but without any distinction of rank by "their dress, all being in the state of nature; that is, in plain "English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed; "yet there was not the least wanton smile, or immodest gesture

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" among them. They walked and moved with the ſame majeſtic " grace which Milton deſcribes our general mother with; there " were many among them as exactly proportioned as ever any " goddeſs was drawn by the pencil of a Guido or a Titian—and " moſt of their ſkins ſhiningly white, only adorned by their " beautiful hair divided into many treſſes, hanging on their " ſhoulders, braided, either with pearl or ribbon, perfectly repre- " ſenting the figures of the graces.

" I was here convinced of the truth of a reflection I have " often made, that if it were the faſhion to go naked the face " would be hardly obſerved. I perceived that the ladies of the " moſt delicate ſkins and fineſt ſhapes had the greateſt ſhare of " my admiration, though their faces were ſometimes leſs beauti- " ful than thoſe of their companions; to tell you the truth, I " had wickedneſs enough to wiſh ſecretly that Mr. Gervais could " have been there inviſible; I fancy it would have much im- " proved his art, to ſee ſo many fine women naked, in different " poſtures, ſome in converſation, ſome working, others drink- " ing coffee or ſherbet; and many, negligently lying on their " cuſhions, while their ſlaves (generally pretty girls of ſeventeen " or eighteen) were employed in braiding their hair in ſeveral " pretty fancies.—They generally take this diverſion once a " week, and ſtay there at leaſt four or five hours without getting " cold, by immediate coming out of the hot bath into the cool " room.—I was charmed with their civility and beauty, and ſhould " have been very glad to paſs more time with them, but was in " haſte to ſee the ruins of Juſtinian's church, which did not " afford me ſo agreeable a proſpect as I had left, being little more " than a heap of ſtones."

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Of European women.

As we have hitherto met with but little diverſity in the employments of women, as their amuſements have not been numerous in the countries we have ſurveyed, we now proceed to take a view of Europe; where, though we may not perhaps be able to find the ſcene of female employments enlarged according to our wiſhes, we ſhall at leaſt find a long and ample liſt of female diverſions and amuſements.—If by employment we underſtand being occupied in ſuch things as are uſeful to ſociety, in that caſe women of rank and quality, in moſt of the polite countries of Europe, may be ſtruck entirely out, as having no employment at all; and ſhould we even admit works of fancy and taſte into our liſt of uſeful employments, ſuch is the love of diſſipation, that even few of theſe are at preſent executed by ladies of faſhion. Deſcending from the moſt elevated ranks of female life, to thoſe placed in a middle ſtation, who neither have reaſon to be uplifted with the pride of wealth, made giddy with the glare of preferment, nor depreſſed by the pinching hand of poverty; ſuch we ſhould naturally expect to find employed ſo as to be uſeful to themſelves and to their families; and ſuch we could heartily wiſh the impartiality of hiſtorians would allow us to paint them. But even in this moſt eligible of all human conditions, where their time is not devoured by the giddy vortex of pomp and ceremony, where it is not wreſted from them by the labours neceſſary to procure daily bread; to what is it dedicated? ſeldom! we are afraid, to uſeful purpoſes; but, rather to copying the examples of the ſuperior ranks, and to gadding abroad after every faſhionable folly and amuſement: nor in ſaying this have we acted the part of declaimers; the portrait we have drawn is only too faithful a repreſentation of the times, and naturally points out to us that we are to look for the uſeful and the bene-

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ficial, only among ſuch women as are obliged to gain a ſubſiſtence for themſelves, and perhaps for their children, by their own induſtry. The whole human race is perhaps naturally averſe to labour. From this general view of women, it would ſeem that they are particularly ſo, eſpecially in Europe, where the ſoftneſs of their frame, of their education, and the common indulgence they meet with from our ſex, teach them to look up to us as to beings not only obliged to ſupply all their wants, but even to miniſter to all their pleaſures, ſeldom conſidering how far ſuch a miniſtration is agreeable to our inclination; and even ſometimes inſiſting on running the giddy round of amuſement, when conſcious that it is out of our power to ſupply the means of its uſeleſs extravagance. But this is not all; in many companies, eſpecially of the politer ſort of women, we have heard the inconſiderate aſſembly, as with one voice, exclaim againſt the marriages of ſuch as were poor, why, ſay they, ſhould ſuch people marry? they can only fill the country with beggars! never recollecting, that if ſuch only were to marry as could afford to bring up their children in idleneſs, they themſelves would want ſervants to do for them thoſe offices they think ſo much beneath their dignity, and that the ſtrength of a hive does not conſiſt in the drones that devour, but in the bees that collect the honey.

BUT to return to our ladies of rank and faſhion, there are ſtill to be found among them ſeveral, who beſtow no inconſiderable ſhare of time and attention on the concerns of their families, as alſo upon the cultivation of ſome of the fine arts, as muſic, painting, drawing, &c. To run through the long and varied liſt of occupations, in which women of the middling and lower conditions of life employ themſelves, for pleaſure, or for profit,

would

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would be tedious to our female readers, who know them much better than we do; we ſhall therefore only obſerve in general, that, in all the polite countries of Europe, the proper office of women of middling fortune is the care, inſpection, and management of every thing belonging to the family, while that of the men is to provide by their labour and induſtry what the women are to manage with care and frugality. When we deſcend to the lower and more uſeful claſſes of women, who not having been caſt into the lap of fortune, are obliged to work that they may live; we find their employments various and extenſive: moſt of the manufactures in Europe, which do not depend ſo much upon ſtrength as upon delicacy, are in a great meaſure carried on by women, and many of thoſe which are even of a rougher kind receive a laſt poliſh from their ſofter touch. It is to their patient induſtry and ductile hands that we owe our fineſt linens, cambrics, and lawns; it is to them alſo that we are indebted for a great part of our gold and ſilver laces, our embroideries, and a variety of other works of taſte and elegance, too tedious to mention. Another part of them, whoſe lot is caſt in a different, though not leſs uſeful manner, employ themſelves in aſſiſting the huſbandman in a variety of the leſs laborious branches of agriculture; and, not a few there are, who even toil in reaping and gathering in the harveſt: but what we ought to value above every thing, is that cleanneſs, which by their means we enjoy in our houſes and cloaths; benefits which we could hardly, or at leaſt aukwardly, procure for ourſeves.

Nu ſiug of chi dren the natural employment of women.

It may perhaps be thought ſtrange, that in deſcribing the various employments of women, we have not hitherto mentioned that which of all others is their moſt natural and common office,

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the nurſing and bringing up of children; a ſubject which we have reſerved entirely for this place, that we might not be under the neceſſity of ſo frequent a repetition, as we ſhould have been otherwiſe led to by its occurring in every period, and in every country we have had occaſion to mention.

THE moſt tender care and anxious ſolicitude for their infant offſpring is an innate idea throughout the wide extent of animal nature, much more ſtrongly imprinted on the minds of females than of males: a wiſe inſtitution of Providence, for which various reaſons will eaſily occur to the intelligent reader, and which we need not therefore take the trouble of pointing out.

A LITTLE attention to the nature and œconomy of the brute animals will convince us, that the care of their young is an innate principle, and not the effect of reaſoning; but we ſhall be ſtill more convinced of this, if we attentively conſider the females of the human genus, in ſavage and in civil life; a conſideration that will uniformly point out to us, that this innate care and anxious ſolicitude diminiſh gradually, in proportion as women advance more toward that perfection, or rather imperfection of politeneſs, to which ſeveral nations have now ariſen; where folly, faſhion, and the love of pleaſure, have ſo much engroſſed their affection, as in moſt caſes greatly to weaken, and in ſome totally to obliterate, a paſſion hardly leſs natural than that of ſelf-preſervation.

Conſiderations on nurſing.

THAT women were, as well as other animals, intended by nature to nurſe and bring up their own children, is a truth which we preſume nobody will deny; hence rigid philoſophers, in dogmatizing on this ſubject, have as uſual ſhewn their cynical moroſeneſs,

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moroſeneſs, by branding ſuch of the ſex as did otherwiſe, with every indignant epithet; never conſidering that ill-humour, particularly when exerted againſt a woman, ſeldom ſerves to reclaim; nor that nature in many caſes ſeems to have left ſomething in ſuch a ſituation that art might have room to improve it; nor that they themſelves, while they are railing from their ſtudies at the women for deviating from nature, are at the ſame time deviating moſt widely from her in almoſt every action of their lives. But let us conſider the matter a little more attentively, and we ſhall find that nature gave to horſes tails: convenience directs us to cut them: ſhe gave to men hair and beards, but we reckon it no crime to crop the one and ſhave the other: ſhe gave to women breaſts, and furniſhed them with milk, the natural food of infants; but that they ſhould be thereby conſtantly obliged to nurſe them, would be almoſt as whimſical as that we ſhould be obliged to let our hair and our beards remain in a ſtate of nature; eſpecially as it now appears, by many repeated trials, that children can in ſome caſes be brought up better by the milk of another woman than by that of the mother, and that they frequently do exceedingly well without any milk at all: every thing elſe therefore being equal, we are of opinion that there is no ſuch preference due to the milk of the mother, as phyſicians and philoſophers would willingly make us believe; nor can they from experience, the only ſure guide in ſuch enquiries, deduce any ſuch inference; all young animals we imagine may naturally thrive beſt upon the milk of animals of the ſame ſpecies, but to carry this idea to individuals, is giving a limited and narrow view of the operations of nature, and we might almoſt with an equal degree of credibility ſuppoſe, that a young plant could no where grow ſo well as in the ſame

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hot-bed which nouriſhed its parent, as that a child could not thrive as well by the milk of any healthful woman, as by that of its mother.

To ſuppoſe, therefore, that a child does not equally thrive by good milk from any other perſon, is eſtabliſhing a ſpecific quality in the milk of every mother, adapted to the conſtitution of her own child only; and putting the important buſineſs of rearing children on ſuch a footing, that when the mother chances to die, the poor infant muſt either expire ſoon after, or, at beſt, live a feeble monument of improper nouriſhment; and ſo perpetually point out a blunder in the conſtitution of nature. Nor do the young of the human ſpecies only, thrive equally on the milk of the ſpecies; it is the ſame with the young of all other animals; at leaſt of the domeſtic animals with which we are acquainted. The calf and the lamb do juſt as well when they ſuck another cow or ewe, as when they ſuck the dam which brought them forth; provided the animals be healthful, and the quantity of milk ſufficient to maintain the young ones committed to their care; nay, we have never, in ſome of the beſt breeding counties of England, been able to obſerve any difference, if they had plenty of milk, whether they received it by ſucking or lapping.

FROM theſe obſervations it appears, that what has hitherto been alleged of the mother's milk being the only proper nouriſhment for her own child, has only been the viſion of theory, and not the reſult of experience. We would not, however, on that account, endeavour to diſſuade women from this moſt pleaſant taſk of nurſing; we perſuade ourſelves, that it is in moſt caſes their duty; and if their minds are not corrupted by purſuits leſs natural,

natural, we flatter ourſelves, that, in all caſes, they will find it their greateſt pleaſure; eſpecially when they conſider, that by ſo doing they have the dear pledges of their connubial love conſtantly under their own care and direction; whereby they are ſafe from the ſeverity, careleſſneſs, and inattention of the female mercenary, who is but ſeldom one of the beſt of her ſex; ſuch being, with difficulty, prevailed upon to quit the care of their own infants, for the ſake of money, unleſs urged to it by lawleſs neceſſity.

THERE are a variety of other arguments, which offer themſelves in favour of this practice; but as they have been ſo frequently muſtered, by almoſt every author who has wrote on nurſing, we ſhall not now intrude them on our fair readers: we cannot, however, quit the ſubject, without making one obſervation, which we do not recollect to have met with. In every place, where the practice of giving out children to nurſe is common, the ſtate is thereby a conſiderable loſer; becauſe it is the idle and wealthy only who can afford to give them out, and the poor only who are obliged to take them in; whence it evidently follows, that the number of the children of the rich is increaſed, and of the poor decreaſed; for a woman, who ſends her child to nurſe as ſoon as it is born, has, or may have, a child every year; whereas ſhe, who, after having ſuckled her own child, is obliged to take in another, cannot again bring forth a child in leſs than twenty-ſeven months, or perhaps three years. But a ſtate is not ſo much enriched by the children of wealthy and independent parents, as by thoſe of the poor; as the number required to govern and direct are few, in proportion to thoſe who are to be governed and directed. May not this be one of the cauſes, why

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Great Britain ſends abroad ſo many poor young gentlemen, reſolutely determined to be rich? May it not alſo be one of the cauſes, why, at home, ſhe is ſometimes at a loſs for labourers, and often for able-bodied men to man her fleets and recruit her armies? May it not, in time, produce ſuch an increaſe of children to the rich, and ſo much decreaſe the poor, that we may become like the Spaniards? almoſt all gentlemen; too proud to work, and too poor to be idle.

WERE we to judge whether every woman ſhould nurſe her own children, from the practice of the females of other animals, we ſhould certainly find it to be a duty from which ſhe could hardly find any excuſe to exempt herſelf; as almoſt the whole of the birds and the beaſts perform this taſk to their own young *. Were we to judge of it from the hiſtory of man, we ſhould find, that in almoſt all nations it has been the common practice; though to that practice, like all other general rules, there have been many exceptions. We have reaſon to believe, that the wives and concubines of the patriarchs conſtantly ſuckled their own children; the ſame cuſtom obtained among the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Scythians, the Medes and Perſians; and it invariably takes place at this day in every nation, where culture has not degenerated into vice, and where the voice of nature is ſtronger than that of pleaſure.

WHAT at firſt gave riſe to the cuſtom of one woman ſuckling the child of another, muſt have been the death or ſickneſs of the

* The Oſtrich and the Cuckow do not hatch their eggs, nor take care of their young. The Oſtrich lays her eggs in the ſand, and they are hatched by the ſun. The Cuckow lays them in the neſt of another bird, who, miſtaking them for her own, hatches them, and rears the young.

mother:

mother: indolence taking the hint from this, and willing to be excuſed from the toil of tending and ſuckling, devolved the important offices on ſlaves, and on mercenaries. When, or where, this became at firſt the practice, hiſtory has not informed us; we find it, however, to have been pretty general during many of the moſt flouriſhing ages of the Grecian ſtates; almoſt every nation, and often every province, is peculiarly remarkable for ſome produce of its ſoil, or qualification of its inhabitants; the Spartan matrons had acquired the glory of being famous for nurſing; they laid aſide the uſe of ſwaddling-bands; a cuſtom which had prevailed from the remoteſt antiquity; they uſed children to eat every ſort of food; taught them not to be afraid when alone, or in the dark; and to relinquiſh theſe peeviſh and fretful humours, which often render them ſo troubleſome and diſagreeable: on theſe accounts, Spartan nurſes were eagerly ſought after, and hired by ſuch as could afford them, into all the other ſtates of Greece: ſeveral of the moſt eminent warriors and ſtateſmen gloried in having been nurſed by the matrons of Sparta. It was not, however, a general cuſtom for the Grecian women to give their children out to nurſe; their poets, as well as thoſe of the Romans, frequently introduce their ladies of the firſt quality ſuckling, and taking care of their children; but as the Romans imitated the Greeks in almoſt all their manners and cuſtoms, as they became more alive to the feelings of luxury, and leſs to thoſe of nature, they copied them alſo, in giving their infants to be ſuckled and taken care of by ſlaves and hired nurſes, while they themſelves rioted in all the pomp and extravagance of the richeſt and moſt extravagant city in the world.

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When the frozen regions of the North poured out ſwarms of barbarians into the Roman empire, they overturned not only the whole ſyſtem of Roman government, but alſo that of luxury and of pleaſure; theſe being diſſipated, nature reſumed her empire, and inſtigated the women again to apply themſelves to the taſk of ſuckling and rearing their own children. Several centuries elapſed amid the depopulations of war, and marked by ferocity of manners; when theſe gave place to the arts of peace and cultivation, luxury, and the love of pleaſure, began to creep in, and women reſumed the practice of putting their children to nurſe, that they might have more time to beſtow upon pleaſure and amuſement. The French and Italians, who have always taken the lead in faſhion, ſet the firſt example; they were ſoon followed by Britain, and the other neighbouring nations, with ſuch exactneſs, that, at preſent, there is ſcarcely to be found in Europe a woman of family and faſhion who will take the trouble of nurſing her own child; but happy were it, if the contagion ended among theſe, and did not ſpread itſelf to the middling ranks of life; who, fond of imitating their ſuperiors, relinquiſh likewiſe the taſk of nurſing, on various pretenſions, that, like theſe ſuperiors, they may dedicate themſelves more freely to the rage of pleaſure.

Amuſements and methods of killing time in Europe.

Such are the preſent employments of our women; but employment is not the mode of the times. In all the polite countries of Europe, theſe of rank and faſhion, as well as thoſe in decent circumſtances, having an extraordinary portion of time upon their hands, with an almoſt irreſiſtible inclination to pleaſure in whatever form it offers itſelf, are more often to be met with at the ſhrine

ſhrine of amuſement than of induſtry: and hence it has been commonly obſerved, that wherever there is a ſhow, an entertainment, or a crowd, the women are more numerous than the men: but theatrical entertainments of all kinds; balls, aſſemblies, operas, ridottos, and particularly reviews, ſeem to be the ſcenes of their peculiar delight; becauſe, perhaps, at theſe, they can not only indulge their natural propenſity for ſhow and oſtentation, but find them alſo convenient places for love, or for intrigue. Riding, walking, ſailing, and, in ſome countries of Europe, even ſkaiting, and being drawn on the ice in ſledges, are female amuſements. Beſides theſe, and many others too tedious to mention, the women of faſhion, in moſt parts of Europe, ſpend a great part of their time in receiving and returning viſits; and in ſome of the politer nations, modern viſiting is not ſpending a ſocial hour together; it conſiſts only in her ladyſhip ordering her coachman to drive to the doors of ſo many of her acquaintances, and her footman, at each of them, to give in a card with her name, while the lady of the houſe, though, in the polite phraſe, not at home, is looking through the window all the time to ſee what paſſes; and in ſome convenient time after returns the viſit, and is ſure to be received in the ſame manner.

SHOPPING, as it is called, is another faſhionable female amuſement; in order to which, two, three, or ſometimes more ladies, accompanied by their gallants, ſet out to make a tour through the moſt faſhionable ſhops, and to look at all the moſt faſhionable goods, without any intention of laying out one ſingle ſixpence. After a whole forenoon ſpent in plaguing mercers and milliners, they return home, either thoughtleſs of their folly, or which, per-

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haps, is worſe, exulting at the thoughts of the trouble and diſturbance they have given.

But of all the happy inventions diſcovered by modern ingenuity for the killing of time, card-playing is juſtly entitled to the pre-eminence; with an immoderate itch for this amuſement, which we are at a loſs whether to reckon public or private, both ſexes, and all ranks and degrees of people, are deeply infected; particularly indolent clergy, and women, who, having little to do, dedicate themſelves ſo aſſiduouſly to play, that the habit is in many become ſo ſtrong, as to be fooliſhly reckoned even neceſſary to their exiſtence. To cards, when made uſe of only to unbend the mind fatigued with ſtudy, or to paſs away an idle hour, we have no objection, nor do we flatter ourſelves, that any thing we can ſay on the ſubject will, in the leaſt, influence the conduct of ſuch as are habituated to them. We would only, therefore, as we paſs along, recommend to the miniſters of religion, to ſet a watch over their tongues, while playing with bad ſucceſs, leſt an unguarded oath, or a few ſilly exclamations at a card-table, ſhould do more hurt to religion, and to their ſacred character, than they are aware of. To the fair, to the lovely virgins of this favourite iſland, when thus engaged, we would recommend the ſtricteſt care of their temper, leſt ſomething ſhould eſcape from their lips, that may belie the ſoft, the bewitching appearance, with which nature has painted their exterior forms.

To the female diverſions and amuſements now mentioned, we might add many more; but as a bare recital of names, makes a dry and unentertaining page, and as a deſcription of each would

be tedious and inſipid, we ſhall only obſerve, in general, that ſuch is human, and particularly female nature, when tutored by European art, that it conſtantly ſhews a greater proclivity to the gay and the amuſive, than to the ſober and uſeful ſcenes of life; and loves better to ſport away time amid the flowers that ſtrow the path of pleaſure, than to be entangled among the briars and thorns which perplex the path of care. But notwithſtanding this, we muſt do juſtice to the ſex, in aſſerting, that as their attachments are always ſtronger than thoſe of the men, ſuch of them as attach themſelves to œconomy and induſtry, purſue their plan with a ſteady and inflexible conſtancy, which male nature perhaps is incapable of arriving at; and are neither to be tempted to deviate from it by the hope of pleaſure, nor by the fear of danger and of pain.

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Of the Treatment and Condition of Women, and the various Advantages and Diſadvantages of their Sex, in ſavage and civil Life.

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Thoughts on the condition of women.

THERE is in the fate of women ſomething exceedingly ſingular; they have at all periods, and almoſt in all countries, been, by our ſex, conſtantly oppreſſed and adored. And what renders their caſe ſtill more extraordinary, is, that we have not oppreſſed, becauſe we hated, but becauſe we loved them. We have not in Aſia and Africa confined them; becauſe, like the lion and the tyger, we were afraid of their depredations; but becauſe we were unwilling that any body ſhould ſhare with us the pleaſure and enjoyment of their company. We have not in Europe aſſumed almoſt the ſole management of affairs, becauſe we were afraid that they would manage them to our prejudice, but only to ſave them the trouble of thought and of labour, and to enable them to live in eaſe and elegance.

SUCH, however, is not the condition of women in thoſe ſtates approaching the neareſt to ſavage barbarity; there, they have not attained conſequence enough even to merit confinement; and far leſs, to merit that exemption from labour and perpetual guardianſhip, by which, in Europe, they are complimented and chained. As ſtrength and courage are in ſavage life the only means of attaining to power and diſtinction, ſo weakneſs and timidity are the

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certain paths to ſlavery and oppreſſion: on this account, we ſhall almoſt conſtantly find women among ſavages condemned to every ſpecies of ſervile, or rather, of ſlaviſh drudgery; and ſhall as conſtantly find them emerging from this ſtate, in the ſame proportion as we find the men emerging from ignorance and brutality, and approaching to knowledge and refinement; the rank, therefore, and condition, in which we find women in any country, mark out to us with the greateſt preciſion, the exact point in the ſcale of civil ſociety, to which the people of ſuch country have arrived; and were their hiſtory entirely ſilent on every other ſubject, and only mentioned the manner in which they treated their women, we would, from thence, be enabled to form a tolerable judgment of the barbarity, or culture of their manners.

THERE is hardly any thing more natural to the rude and uncultivated mind, than to conſider ſtrength as giving unlimited right to whatever it can conquer; it is one of the firſt ideas which is derived from attention to the whole of the brute animals; every one of which conſtantly appropriates to itſelf, any thing it can take from a weaker being of the ſame, or of any other ſpecies. Whether the human mind has in its rude and barbarous ſtate the ſame innate idea of right, or whether it has borrowed that idea from the other animals, is uncertain; but it appears from hiſtory, that every ſavage people either have it from nature or from imitation; and thence undoubtedly aroſe at firſt the barbarous cuſtom of enſlaving and treating with the utmoſt ſeverity that ſex which nature had formed, not to force, but to charm us into a proper behaviour towards them: but though among people of ſavage and uncultivated manners, this natural weakneſs of the ſex, has ſubjected them to almoſt every ſpecies of indignity and ill uſage;

among

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among the civil and polite, it has had a very different effect: theſe, diſdaining to take the advantage of weakneſs, and rather conſidering it as intitled to their protection and indulgence, have, from generoſity of principle, raiſed women to a rank and condition, in many caſes ſuperior even to that enjoyed by themſelves; and this merely in condeſcenſion to their weakneſs: but as we ſhall have occaſion afterwards to mention the cauſes of the ill treatment of the ſex, we ſhall at preſent proceed to take a view of their progreſs from ſlavery to freedom, and to mark the various cauſes which have more or leſs accelerated or retarded that progreſs.

Condition of women in the patriarchal ages.

THIS enquiry we ſhall begin with the condition of women among the ancient patriarchs, a condition which we ſhall find to have been but extremely indifferent. When Abraham entertained the angels ſent to denounce the deſtruction of Sodom, he appears to have treated his wife as a menial ſervant: "Make ready quickly," ſaid he to her, "three meaſures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes on the hearth." And from the ſequel of the ſtory it is plain, that ſhe was not admitted to partake of the entertainment ſhe had dreſſed: In ages ſo remote as theſe we are now conſidering, the imperfect and mutilated accounts from which alone we can draw any information, ſometimes relate incidents which have ſo little reſemblance to the manners and cuſtoms of our times, that we are altogether at a loſs how to account for them. Though Sarah officiated as a ſervant in preparing this entertainment, ſhe had at the ſame time one, or rather, perhaps, ſeveral handmaids or maid-ſervants under her, but in what they were employed, or how they ſerved their miſtreſs, we can only conjecture.

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We have already obſerved, that among nations but little cultivated, power is conſtantly made uſe of as a means to enſlave; and from this principle we muſt derive the ill-treatment of the Iſraelitiſh women, and the abuſe of their captives. In the whole early hiſtory of that people, there is hardly one inſtance of a woman having been treated with indulgence, or of a captive having experienced humanity.

In many parts of the Eaſt, water is only to be met with deep in the earth, and the drawing of it from the wells conſequently fatiguing and laborious. Such, however, was the taſk of the daughters of Jethro the Midianite, to whom ſo little regard was paid, either on account of the rank of their father, as high-prieſt of the country, or on account of their own ſex, that the neighbouring ſhepherds not only inſulted them, but forcibly took from them the water they had drawn. Such was the taſk of Rebecca, who not only drew water for Abraham's ſervant, but for his camels alſo; while the ſervant ſtood an idle ſpectator of the toil; and what makes his behaviour appear the more extraordinary is, that his circumſtances at that time were theſe, in which men who have any ſenſibility generally exert their utmoſt efforts to pleaſe and become acceptable: he was on an embaſſy to court the damſel for Iſaac his maſter's ſon. When he had concluded his bargain, and was carrying her home, we meet with another circumſtance which ſtrongly marks the inferiority of women in the times we are now conſidering. When ſhe firſt approached Iſaac, who had walked out into the fields to meet them, ſhe did it in the moſt ſubmiſſive manner, as if ſhe had been approaching a lord and maſter rather than a fond and paſſionate lover; from which, as well as from ſeveral other parts of the ſacred hiſtory, it

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would ſeem that women, inſtead of endeavouring, as in modern times, to perſuade the world that they confer an immenſe favour on a lover by deigning to accept of him, made no difficulty of confeſſing that the obligation was conferred on themſelves*. When Jacob went to viſit his uncle Laban, a man of conſiderable property, he met Rachel, Laban's daughter, in the fields, attending on the flocks of her father; and in a much later period, Tamar, one of the daughters of king David, was ſent by her father to perform the ſervile office of making cakes for her brother Amnon. And ſtill later than this, the queen of Jeroboam king of Iſrael, went in perſon, perhaps on foot or on an aſs, to conſult an old prophet. The ſimplicity of the times in which theſe things happened, take off a great deal from their weight, and make them prove leſs than they would otherwiſe do; but in ſpite of that ſimplicity, they ſtill make it appear, that women were not then treated even with the rudiments of that delicacy they have happily experienced in ages, and among people more poliſhed and refined.

Proofs of this condition.

But ſhould the ſimplicity of the times be admitted as a full excuſe for what we have now mentioned, there are other proofs that women were treated in an indignant manner, which can admit of no ſuch excuſe, as they appear to have been deliberation enforced by law. Huſbands had a diſcretionary power of divorcing their wives, without aſſigning any other reaſon for it than that they were not agreeable to them; and as if ſuch a power over the bodies of women had not been a circumſtance ſufficiently humiliating to the ſex, they had another power of an extraordi-

* This was the caſe with Ruth, who had laid her down at the feet of Boaz; and being aſked by him who ſhe was, anſwered, "I am Ruth thine handmaid; ſpread, therefore, thy ſkirt over thine handmaid, for thou art a near kinſman."

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nary nature over their minds alſo. Huſbands and fathers were authorized to annul and make void even the moſt ſolemn vows of their wives and daughters, provided ſuch vows were not made in the hearing of theſe huſbands and fathers; in which caſe, if they did not immediately enter their diſſent, they were conſidered as parties who had approved of theſe vows, and could not ſet them aſide afterward. Was not this plainly declaring that women were beings of a nature ſo inferior as not to be capable of entering properly into any ſolemn or religious engagements for themſelves? That in ſome caſes a kind of public contempt was thrown on the ſex, ſeems to appear from the law concerning child-bed purification, by which it was enacted, That ſhe who had brought forth a female child, ſhould not be accounted clean in leſs than ſixty-ſix days; whereas ſhe who had brought forth a male, was clean in half that time. As no natural reaſon can be aſſigned for ſuch a law, it has generally been thought expreſſive of that contempt and degradation which, in the times we are delineating, was thrown on the ſex, as an inferior order of beings.

To the proofs we have already brought of the deſpicable condition of women among the nations we have mentioned, we may add the univerſal cuſtoms of polygamy and concubinage, both of them impoſitions, contrary to the inclination of the ſex, and practices which wound ſo deeply the delicacy of their feelings, that we cannot ſuppoſe any woman voluntarily to agree to them, even where they are ſanctified by cuſtom and by law. Wherever, therefore, they take place, we may aſſure ourſelves that women have but little or no authority, and have ſcarcely arrived at any conſequence in ſociety. In ſuch a condition of the ſex we do not expect to find any of them riſing into great eſteem, and far leſs

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to the ſupreme power; circumſtances which, however, even contrary to all appearances, we ſometimes meet with. A wiſe woman, as ſhe is called in ſcripture, ſaved the city of Abel, by prevailing on the inhabitants to cut off the head of Sheba, and throw it over the wall to Joab, who thereupon retired with his army. And Deborah, a propheteſs, had been raiſed to the dignity of judging Iſrael, a dignity which ſhe maintained for ſeveral years; the exaltation of theſe, and of others, into conditions ſo different from the reſt of their ſex, is, perhaps, not to be accounted for upon any other principle than the power of ſuperſtition, which readily believed that every glimmering of knowledge, and every ſuperior attainment, were inſpirations of the divinity; and taught the people that to the direction of thoſe, whom they ſuppoſed thus inſpired, they ſhould yield themſelves up to be governed with the moſt implicit confidence.

Condition of the Egyptian women.

FROM the ancient people of Iſrael, and the nations around them, where women were treated with ſo much indignity and contempt; let us turn our eyes towards the Egyptians, whom we ſhall find, on the contrary, uſing them with a complaiſance and humanity which would have done honour to the moſt enlightened ages. As theſe people were ſituated in the midſt of nations, who in this particular ſhewed them ſo ill an example, before we proceed to the facts, let us enquire into the cauſes which produced them.

Cauſes of this condition.

WHEREVER the human race live ſolitary and unconnected with each other, they are ſavage and barbarous; wherever they aſſociate together, that aſſociation becomes productive of ſofter manners, and a more engaging deportment. While people in the neighbourhood of

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Egypt were allowed, by their ſituation, in every ſeaſon, to roam about at pleaſure, and while their woods and their rivers afforded them the means of conſtantly ſubſiſting themſelves by hunting and fiſhing; the Egyptians, from the nature of their country, annually overflowed by the Nile, had no wild beaſts to hunt, nor could then procure any thing by fiſhing; on theſe accounts they were under a neceſſity of applying themſelves to agriculture, a kind of life which naturally brings mankind together for mutual convenience and aſſiſtance; but, beſides, they were every year, during the inundation of the river, obliged to aſſemble themſelves together, and take ſhelter either on the riſing grounds, or in the houſes which were raiſed upon piles above the reach of the waters; here the men and the women being conſtantly in the company of each other, and almoſt every employment totally ſuſpended, a thouſand inducements, not to be found in a ſolitary ſtate, would naturally prompt them to render themſelves agreeable to each other, and hence their manners would begin more early to aſſume a ſofter poliſh, and more elegant refinement, than thoſe of the other nations who ſurrounded them.

FROM this early ſociety, where the men firſt became acquainted with the intrinſic merit of the ſex, and where they on their part had an opportunity of exerting every power, and diſplaying every charm that could pleaſe; they ſoon came to be treated in a manner widely different from the women of any of the neighbouring nations. We have already related from Herodotus, that they were employed in agriculture, and in merchandiſe; but there is great reaſon to believe, that if any of them were employed in agriculture, it was only thoſe of the meaneſt condition, and that in general they were exempted from performing any of the

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the laborious taſks, commonly aſſigned them by barbarians; a thing which to us appears to be demonſtrated from the whole of the conduct of their men towards them, and which receives an additional proof from the ſtory of Pſammenitus, one of their kings; who, being made priſoner at the reduction of Memphis, was with the chief of his nobility placed on an eminence near the city, while his own daughter, and the reſt of the captive women were ordered to bear water in pitchers from the river; which ſo mortified the king, that he is ſaid to have felt more on that occaſion than for the loſs of his liberty and kingdom; but, had this been a common cuſtom in Egypt, as we have already ſeen it among all the neighbouring nations, it could not have been choſen as the moſt eligible mode of adding to the ſorrows of the diſtreſſed monarch. What we every day ſee or perform loſes all power of affecting us, however degrading in its nature; while ſomething which we have not been uſed to, though leſs degrading, awakes our keeneſt ſenſations, and ſtings our hearts with the ſharpeſt affliction.

Egyptian women not confined.

We ſhall afterwards have occaſion to mention, that in a very early period the practice of confining women was introduced into the Eaſt; this practice, however, inſtituted by the rage of jealouſy, and maintained by unlawful power, was never adopted by the Egyptians, as appears from the ſtory of Pharaoh's daughter, who was going with her train of maids to bathe in the river, when ſhe found Moſes hid among the reeds; and alſo from that of the wife of Potiphar, who, if confined in the manner of the Eaſt, could not have found the opportunities ſhe did to ſolicit Joſeph to her adulterous embrace. To theſe teſtimonies of the ſacred ſcripture we may add the authority of Herodotus,

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dotus, and ſome of the other writers on ancient Egypt, who, beſides mentioning ſeveral anecdotes which could not have happened to women in harams and ſeraglios, generally agree that they were equal, if not ſuperior, in authority to the men; and if they were, it would be inconſiſtent to think that they allowed themſelves to be ſhut up and deprived of ſociety, by beings who neither had, nor claimed any ſuperiority over them.

Laws and cuſtoms in their favour.

THE men in Egypt were not allowed to indulge in polygamy, a ſtate which always preſuppoſes women to be ſlaves. The chaſtity of virgins was protected by a law of the ſevereſt nature; he who committed a rape on a free woman, had his privities cut off, that it might be out of his power ever to perpetrate the like crime, and that others might be terrified by ſo dreadful a puniſhment. Concubinage, as well as polygamy, ſeems either not to have been lawful, or at leaſt not faſhionable; it was a liberty, however, in which their kings were ſometimes indulged, for we find when Seſoſtris ſet out on his expedition to conquer the world, he left the government of the kingdom to his brother, with full power over every thing, except the royal diadem, the queen, and royal concubines. The queens of Egypt are ſaid to have been much more honoured, as well as more readily obeyed than the kings; and it is alſo related, that the huſbands were in their marriage-contracts obliged to promiſe obedience to their wives; a thing which in our modern times we are often obliged to perform, though our wives entered into the promiſe.

BUT nothing can exhibit the power and conſequence of the Egyptian women in a ſtronger light than a law, by which it was ordained, That daughters and not ſons ſhould provide for their parents

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parents when they became aged or indigent. And we ſhall only add further, that the honour and reſpect paid to them, above thoſe of other nations, likewiſe appears from the behaviour of Solomon to Pharaoh's daughter. Solomon had many other wives beſides this princeſs, and was married to ſeveral of them before her, which according to the Jewiſh law ought to have entitled them to a kind of preference; but ſuch was not the caſe, for we hear of no particular palace having been built for any of the others, nor of the worſhip of any of their gods having been introduced into Jeruſalem; while for Pharaoh's daughter a magnificent palace was erected, and ſhe permitted, though expreſsly contrary to the Jewiſh law, to worſhip the gods of her own country; circumſtances which we cannot believe would have happened, had not the regard of the Egyptians for their women prompted them to have it ſtipulated with Solomon in the marriage agreement. But loaded with all the honours and preferments we have mentioned, inveſted often with the ſovereign power, as well as the management of their own families; the fair ſex were ſometimes reached by ſuperſtition, that frenzy of the human mind, which neither regards the laws of nature nor of nations; a virgin was at certain times ſacrificed to Annubis.

BESIDES the privilege of ſucceeding to the throne itſelf, in default of male iſſue, the Egyptian daughters had a right of ſucceſſion to the paternal inheritance of their fathers; a right hardly to be met with in any of the neighbouring countries, where women were too much deſpiſed to be admitted to inherit what they could not defend. With this rule the inheritance of the ſovereign authority was not thought ſo inconſiſtent, as every ſubject is concerned in defending his country in general, while the defence of

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private property reſts more immediately on the arm of the proprietor. In an early period of the hiſtory of the Aſſyrians and Babylonians, we alſo find women creeping into ſuch conſequence as to ſhare with their huſbands, and ſometimes to aſſume to themſelves the whole of the royal authority; though we have reaſon to believe, that, at the ſame time, they could not inherit the eſtates of their anceſtors.

Aſſyrian women, how treated.

WHILE Ninus, king of Aſſyria, was beſieging Bactria, it is ſaid that the attempt would have failed, had it not been for the aſſiſtance of Semiramis, then wife of one of his principal officers, who planned a method of attacking the city, with ſuch ſuperior ſkill, that he ſoon became maſter of it. Ninus being attracted by the beauty and art of this virago, ſoon became paſſionately fond of her; in the mean time, her huſband foreſeeing that this paſſion would end in his deſtruction, to avoid falling a victim to licentious deſpotiſm, privately put an end to his life. The main obſtacle being thus removed, Ninus took the adultereſs to wife, an action of which, according to ſome authors, he had ſoon reaſon to repent, for ſhe having firſt brought over to her intereſt the principal men of the ſtate, next prevailed on her ſilly huſband to inveſt her for the ſpace of five days with the ſovereign power; a decree was accordingly iſſued, that all the provinces ſhould implicitly obey her during that time; which having obtained, ſhe began the exerciſe of her ſovereignty, by putting to death the too indulgent huſband who had conferred it on her, and ſo ſecuring to herſelf the kingdom. Other authors have denied that Ninus committed this raſh, or Semiramis this execrable deed, but all agree that ſhe ſucceeded her huſband at his death, in whatever manner it happened. Seeing herſelf at the

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head of a mighty empire, and ſtruck with the love of magnificence and of fame, ſhe propoſed to render her name immortal, by performing ſomething that ſhould far ſurpaſs all that had been done by her predeceſſors: the ſcheme ſhe fell upon, was to build, in the ſpace of one year, the mighty city of Babylon; which being finiſhed within the propoſed time, greatly exceeded in magnificence any thing the world had ever ſeen: two millions of men are ſaid to have been conſtantly employed on it, during the time it was erecting.

FROM the advancement of Semiramis to the Aſſyrian empire, it would ſeem that, at leaſt, ſome decent degree of perſonal liberty was one of the prerogatives of the women of that country; for wherever the ſex are ſtrictly confined by their fathers and huſbands, we can hardly ſuppoſe their political exiſtence to have been ſuch as could form a party ſufficient to bring about a total revolution of ſtate; and in the Eaſt they are commonly conſidered as beings too weak and inſignificant, ever to be allowed the privilege of mounting a throne, unleſs aided by the power of ſuperſtition, or the notion of a right derived from their gods. But though the Aſſyrian women ſeem, in general, to have enjoyed ſome liberty, yet their monarchs, according to the cuſtom of their neighbours, had ſeraglios, where ſuch ladies as belonged to them were probably more ſtrictly confined than the other women of the country.

THAT ſeraglios were a part of the magnificence of the Aſſyrian monarchs, appears from ſeveral anecdotes in their hiſtory, and particularly from the ſtory of Sardanapalus, who, inſtead of employing his time in the affairs of government, dedicated himſelf

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entirely to debauchery among his women, affecting not only the ſoftneſs and effeminacy of their voice and manners, but learning alſo to handle the diſtaff, and amuſe himſelf by working in the other trifles with which they were employed. As we have already ſeen that, in the earlier ages, women of the greateſt rank and quality were not aſhamed to perform thoſe offices, which, in our times, would be conſidered as beneath the dignity of their waiting-maids, we are not to be ſurpriſed, that the women of the auguſt monarch of Aſſyria ſhould employ themſelves in ſpinning; but that the effeminate monarch himſelf, who had buſineſs and pleaſure, in ſo many ſhapes, at his command, ſhould take up the diſtaff for his amuſement, not only excites our aſtoniſhment, but our contempt; and ſtrongly marks the littleneſs of that mind, which, ſurrounded with ſuch a variety, could ſelect a diverſion ſo inſignificant, as well as unbecoming. We may, perhaps, account for this, by obſerving, that women of talents, ſuperior to the reſt of their ſex, generally aſſociate with men, and deſpiſe the company of women as trifling and inſignificant; and that men of inferior talents, finding themſelves generally deſpiſed by the men; on that account aſſociate with women. This obſervation, beſides pointing out the reaſon why Sardanapalus confined himſelf, almoſt altogether, to the ſeraglio, likewiſe diſcovers the reaſon why Semiramis arrived at the royal diadem of Aſſyria; an elevation which, though it did honour to the ſex in general, yet did not prove that they had, in general, attained to that importance to which they are entitled, by the place which they hold in the ſcale of rational beings; for, throughout the whole continent of Aſia, women have been, from time immemorial, and ſtill are, conſidered either as public or private property, and ſold to ſuch huſbands as would give the higheſt price for them: in Aſſyria, the former of

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theſe was the cuſtom; women being there the property of the ſtate, and by the magiſtrates diſpoſed of in marriage to the beſt bidder, by way of public auction. We are of opinion, that this cuſtom, or law, took place after the reign of Semiramis; ſo that though, in her time, the ſex might be on a more reſpectable footing, it ſeems that the privileges they then enjoyed, were afterward almoſt entirely wreſted from them by the men.

In an early period of the world, while as yet women had attained to little dignity and conſequence, we find an univerſal notion of female, as well as of male deities, had obtained among mankind; this notion did not ariſe ſolely from the polytheiſm of the times, but alſo from an opinion that the gods propagated their ſpecies, which mortals could not conceive them capable of doing in any other way than that of mortal men. All antiquity demonſtrates it to have been a general opinion, that the gods often cohabited with, and had children by the daughters of men; which children were reckoned partakers of a divine nature in their lifetime; and after their death were worſhipped as real deities. But Semiramis is the firſt woman, we believe, who had influence enough, without pretending to any divine original, to procure the honour of deification after her death; to have temples erected, and the worſhip of a goddeſs addreſſed to her by a numerous crowd of adorers. By what means ſhe procured this diſtinction, in a period, and a country where women were not conſidered as of much importance, we are not told: while alive, an abſolute monarch may eaſily command the obedience of ſubjects in civil matters, but in thoſe of religion, even the ſevereſt deſpot is often incapable of introducing any change. It is, therefore, the more

extraordinary, that Semiramis had influence enough to introduce, after her death, what few monarchs have attempted with ſucceſs when living. We are aware, that when the cuſtom of paying divine honours to illuſtrious perſons after death became univerſal, it was no very difficult matter to be ranked among the gods, but to introduce the cuſtom of conferring that dignity on a ſex, which were then ſo little diſtinguiſhed, muſt have been owing to ſuperior talents and abilities.

Of the Babylonian women.

AMONG the Babylonians, who were at firſt a part of the Aſſyrian empire, and afterwards became their own maſters, women were, probably, of much greater importance than in Aſſyria. The whole hiſtory of mankind, as well as what we ſee among the uncultivated nations of our own times, aſſures us, that where women have attained to little or no importance in ſociety, and are only conſidered as the ſervile inſtruments of ſupplying our wants, and gratifying our paſſions, there is but little care taken, either to adorn their minds, or their bodies. Among the Babylonians, though we are not informed what care was taken of the female mind, from a variety of ſcattered hints, which particularly abound in the prophets of the Old Teſtament, we may infer, that the greateſt attention was beſtowed in decorating and adorning their bodies, with every coſtly ornament which fondneſs could invent, and affluence ſupply: inconteſtible proofs that they were objects of no ſmall importance, and the peculiar care of the men. But further, the Babylonians were a wiſe and cultivated people; and we may with truth aſſert, that proper culture of the human mind has never yet exiſted, without extending itſelf to the intereſts and conveniences of the fair ſex.

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THAT ſome of the queens of Babylon were more regarded, and of greater conſequence than is common to the herd of women confined in the ſeraglios of eaſtern monarchs, appears from the ſtory of Nitocris, conſort of Nabonadius, known in ſcripture by the name of Evil Merodach: while Nabonadius, neglecting the affairs of his kingdom, devoted himſelf entirely to ſcenes of the moſt voluptuous debauchery, Nitocris took upon her the care of the ſtate, and managed it ſo as to give univerſal ſatisfaction; a circumſtance, which was not likely to have happened, had not women poſſeſſed a tolerable ſhare of public eſteem and confidence; which, when we conſider the influence of female ſociety among the Babylonians; and that their women were admitted to convivial meetings, where they lived in a free and unreſtrained manner, with more frequent opportunities than their neighbours of exerting the various arts of pleaſing; and, conſequently, of gaining that aſcendancy which will ever fall to the ſhare of beauty and of ſenſe, will appear not to have been ſo difficult for them to attain, as for the women of the ſurrounding nations. But notwithſtanding of this general importance, ſuch of the Babyloniſh women as were poor, like the poor of every country, were deſtined to attend on, and miniſter to the pleaſures of the rich; who, at their meals, were ſerved by a great number of eunuchs, and ſinging and dancing girls, carefully ſelected from the faireſt and handſomeſt of the country. When the Babylonians became poor, by the ruin of their metropolis, fathers proſtituted their daughters for gain, and huſbands, who had formerly been hindered from uſing their wives ill, by a particular law, then broke through every reſtraint; and, it is ſaid, even compelled them to offer themſelves to ſtrangers for hire.

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Scythian women treated with indulgence.

CONCERNING the condition of the Scythian women we know little; only that they, as well as thoſe of the Gauls and Germans, were anciently held in great eſteem for their ſkill in divination: we know not whether it was on account of this eſteem, or becauſe they were thought weak and inoffenſive, that in ſome caſes the Scythian women were treated with more lenity than the men. By one of their laws, when a father was put to death, all his ſons ſuffered the ſame fate along with him, while the daughters eſcaped with impunity. Theſe people, the moſt plain and ſimple of all antiquity, being reproached with cowardice, for retreating from their deſert frontiers, before an army much ſuperior to their own: "In thoſe deſolate waſtes, ſaid they, we have nothing "worth fighting for; but when you arrive at the tombs of our "anceſtors, and the habitations of our women, you ſhall ſee whe-"ther we can defend them."

Their privileges in ſome other nations.

FROM the accounts handed down to us of the Phœnicians, they appear to have been long a flouriſhing and proſperous people, who had acquired great riches by their ſuperior ſkill in commerce and navigation; we may therefore reaſonably ſuppoſe, that, in a country, whoſe inhabitants were ſo far advanced in the arts of civil life, the women had attained to that importance we generally find them poſſeſſed of in ſuch countries; eſpecially when we conſider the attention that was paid to ornamenting them, by all the finery that an extenſive trade could purchaſe from every part of the globe. But though the Phœnicians ſpared no coſt in adorning their women with all the elegance of the times, they appear to have ſtamped upon them one mark of inferiority and ſubordination; they did not allow them to wear the Tyrian purple, ſo famous in thoſe days; not only on account of its high price, but

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alſo as a badge of diſtinction ſolely appropriated to men; and to ſuch of them only as were of the firſt rank and dignity, though not then, as it was afterwards, altogether confined to royalty. In the Balearic Iſles, of whoſe hiſtory we have now but a few ſcattered hints in ſome of the Greek writers, ſo far were they from fixing any mark of inferiority on the fair ſex, that when any of their women were taken captive, they gave three or four men in exchange for her; a conduct ſo ſingular, that ſome particular reaſon for it muſt have exiſted, of which we are not informed; perhaps it was only done at the firſt planting of ſome colony, while the women, as in the origin of Rome, were few and valuable. Among the Lycians, a people of the Leſſer Aſia, a cuſtom alſo obtained; which, at firſt view, ſeems to exalt the women to a conſequence much ſuperior to that of the men. In their ſex alone was the fountain of honour and nobility, inſomuch that if a woman of quality married a plebeian, their iſſue were noble; but if a nobleman married a foreigner or peaſant, the children, in that caſe, were only plebeians. But this cuſtom, when more nearly examined, will be found to have originated from a different motive than love or eſteem; it is at this day practiſed in ſome parts of America; and the reaſon there given for it is, becauſe they are ſure who is the mother of a child; and that the noble or royal blood of a family may, on her ſide, be eaſily preſerved; whereas they have no certainty who is the father; and by the incontinence of a wife, the noble or royal blood may, on the male ſide, be totally extinguiſhed.

Of the Phœnicians.

If the Phœnicians treated their women with propriety, we may reaſonably expect to find nearly the ſame cuſtoms concerning them tranſplanted into Carthage; as the Carthaginians were originally a colo-

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a colony from Tyre, the capital of Phœnicia. As there was ſomething uncommon in the origin of this colony, and as it was founded by a woman, whoſe name has been immortaliſed by Virgil, and not unknown even to the generality of female readers, we hope it will not be deemed altogether foreign to our ſubject to give a ſhort account of it.

WHILE Tyre flouriſhed in all the pomp of magnificence, as the capital of the Phœnician empire, and the moſt renowned commercial city in the world, Pygmalion, being king, had a ſiſter, called Eliza, but known to us by the name of Dido; which ſiſter he married to Sichæus, one of their own relations. Sichæus was poſſeſſed of great riches, which Pygmalion avariciouſly coveting, put him to death, that they might fall into his hands. Dido, deteſting this execrable deed of her brother, and deſirous to diſappoint him of that wealth, which had been the cauſe of it, cunningly amuſed him, till ſhe had got all things in readineſs; and then privately eloped with the moſt valuable effects of her murdered huſband. After a long ſeries of diſaſtrous events, ſhe at laſt landed on the coaſt of the Mediterranean, at a little diſtance from the place where the piratical city of Tunis now ſtands: there, having purchaſed ſome land of the natives, ſhe ſettled a colony of ſuch as had adhered to, and followed her fortune.

SOON after this ſettlement, the inhabitants of the country, invited by a proſpect of gain, reſorted to the ſtrangers with the neceſſaries of life, and ſuch other commodities as were moſt wanted: finding themſelves always civilly treated, they at laſt gradually incorporated with them into one people. The citizens of Utica, being their ancient neighbours, began alſo to conſider

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them as countrymen; and ſent ambaſſadors, with conſiderable preſents, exhorting them to build a city on the place where they had firſt landed; this propoſal being agreeable to the ſecret wiſhes of Dido, and her infant colony, the city was begun, and called Carthada, or Carthage; which, in the Phœnician language, ſignifies the New City.

WHAT Virgil has relatedc oncerning this firſt queen of Carthage, is only to be conſidered as a poetical fiction; for it appears that ſhe lived at leaſt two hundred years before the time of his hero Æneas, and at laſt finiſhed her days, not as he repreſents, a victim to love, but to that kind of conjugal fidelity then in faſhion, which conſidered it as criminal to marry a ſecond huſband; for, being courted by Jarbas, king of Getulia, and threatened with war in conſequence of a refuſal; and having bound herſelf by an oath to Sichæus, never to conſent to a ſecond marriage, and unwilling to bring a powerful invaſion on her infant colony; to extricate herſelf from the difficulty, ſhe aſcended and leapt into a funeral pile which ſhe had cauſed her ſubjects to erect, unconſcious of the purpoſe to which ſhe intended to apply it.

AMONG a people whoſe political exiſtence was owing to a woman, and to one who in her life had conducted them with ſo much prudence, and at her death made ſo diſintereſted a ſacrifice to procure their ſafety; it is natural to imagine that the ſex would be treated with more deference and regard, than was common in the periods we are reviewing. Accordingly, we have ſeveral reaſons to believe, that the women of Carthage were not, as in many other countries, obliged to do all the ſervile drudgery

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which naturally belonged to the men; nor to ſubmit themſelves to any kind of ſlaviſh ſubjection under that ſex. That the Carthaginians on the contrary had ſentiments of a more elevated nature concerning their women, appears from a ſtory related of them by Diodorus, the Sicilian. When the city of Tyre was beſieged by Alexander the Great, the Tyrians being reduced to the utmoſt extremity, ſent an embaſſy to the Carthaginians imploring their aſſiſtance; the Carthaginians being at the ſame time engaged in a war with the Athenians, and ſcarcely in a condition to make head againſt Agathocles, the Athenian general, were not able to grant that aſſiſtance they ſo earneſtly wiſhed to give; and to ſoften the refuſal, they agreed to receive into Carthage all the wives and children of their friends the Tyrians; that they, at leaſt, might eſcape the outrages which their ſex generally ſuffer at the plundering of a city.

It is the characteriſtic of the men in every enlightened nation to treat the weaker ſex with lenity and indulgence; to this they are prompted, not only by the ſofter ſenſations inſtilled by nature, but alſo by that additional humanity, and thoſe finer feelings, which are commonly the reſult of knowledge; and which raiſe the mind above what is mean, and inſpire it only with what is generous and noble. Hence, whenever we find a people treating their women with propriety, we may, without any further knowledge of their hiſtory, conclude that their minds are not uncultivated. When we find them cultivated, we may conclude, that they treat their women with propriety. We ſhall only add, therefore, concerning the Carthaginians, that the character they bore for wiſdom, for learning, and the arts, leave us no room to

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doubt that they behaved to the fair-ſex in general, as became a people ſo highly diſtinguiſhed.

Perſian women, how treated.

SOME of the Greek and ſeveral of the Roman hiſtorians, in mentioning the ancient Perſians, have dwelt with peculiar ſeverity on the manner in which they treated their women; jealous, almoſt to diſtraction, though not under the influence of a vertical ſun, they confined the whole ſex with the ſtricteſt attention, and could not bear that the eye of a ſtranger ſhould behold the beauty whom they adored. Their monarchs placed almoſt the whole of their grandeur, and of their enjoyment, in the number and beauty of the women of their ſeraglios; which they carefully ſelected from among the faireſt, either taken captive in war, or produced by their own dominions, and purified them for their uſe by a long and tedious preparation, tending to heighten the beauties of nature, and to give an agreeable reliſh to their perſons; a preparation luxurioufly voluptuous, beyond any thing that modern refinement has ever ſuggeſted. Agreeable to an obſervation we made in the beginning of this chapter, every circumſtance in the Perſian hiſtory tends to perſuade us, that the motive which induced them to confine their women with ſo much care and ſolicitude, was only exuberance of love and affection; in the enjoyment of their ſmiles, and their embraces, the happineſs of the men conſiſted, and their approbation was an incentive to deeds of glory and of heroiſm; for theſe reaſons, they are ſaid to have been the firſt who introduced the cuſtom of carrying their wives and concubines to the field, "That the "fight, ſaid they, of all that is dear to us, may animate us to "fight more valiantly in their defence." To offer the leaſt violence,

violence, even in appearance, to a Perſian woman, was to incur certain death from her huſband or guardian; nay, even their kings, though the moſt abſolute in the univerſe, could not alter the manners or cuſtoms of the country which concerned them, as appears from Cabas, a licentious monarch, who, not ſatisfied with the numerous beauties of his ſeraglio, thought he could introduce the community of women, which would afford him an ample opportunity of ſatiating his unbounded luſt; and therefore iſſued a decree, commanding the promiſcuous uſe of all the women of his dominions, whether married or unmarried; upon which his ſubjects roſe in a rebellion that ended in expelling him from the throne. Upon the whole, we may infer that the Perſians loved their women with the utmoſt violence of animal appetite; but had not learned to treat them with that ſoftneſs and good nature, which culture and civilization can only dictate.

NOTWITHSTANDING of this private jealouſy and confinement of the ſex, it would ſeem that there were at the Perſian court women who were introduced on certain occaſions, and with whom every freedom might be uſed, as we learn from the ſtory of Megabyſus, one of the governors of Darius; who having ſent ſome Perſian noblemen to Amintas, king of Macedon, to require him to do homage to his maſter, Amintas having complied with the requeſt, gave them a ſplendid entertainment. Towards the concluſion of it they deſired that, according to the cuſtom of their country, the women might be brought in, to which, though contrary to the cuſtom of the Greeks, the king conſented. The Perſians heated with wine, and thinking they might behave to the Grecian princeſſes, as to the women of Perſia, began to take ſome indecent freedoms; the ſon of Amintas, affronted at

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the treatment of his ſiſters, told the Perſians, that if they would allow the women, in compliance with the cuſtom of Greece, to retire and habit themſelves in a looſe manner, they would then return, and every one might chuſe his partner for the night. The Perſians gladly conſented to this propoſal, the women retired, the prince dreſſed ſome of the moſt comely of his young warriors in looſe female habits, with poinards under their cloaths, and brought them into the room inſtead of the women, as ſoon as the Perſians had each fixed upon his partner, on a ſignal from the prince, every one drew his poinard, and ſlaughtered the whole of them on the ſpot.

Of the Sybarites.

BEFORE we take leave of theſe dark and unenlightened periods, we have been running over, where the hiſtoric page hardly affords even the glimmering of a taper to direct us on our way, we muſt obſerve, that there are many other ancient people and nations whom we might have mentioned, but have paſſed over them in ſilence, becauſe we are hardly acquainted with any thing but their names; or, at moſt, with a few of their warlike exploits and remarkable revolutions. We cannot help, however, making a few obſervations on the Sybarites, the moſt remarkable people of antiquity.

The Sybarites, from the imperfect accounts we have of them, placed the whole of their happineſs in indolence, eating, finery, and women. Their bodies were ſo much relaxed with ſloth, and their minds with voluptuouſneſs, that the greateſt affront that could be offered to any one, was to call him a Sybarite, an appellation, which comprehended in it almoſt every human crime, and every human folly. In grottoes, cooled with fountains, their

youth

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youth ſpent a great part of their time in ſcenes of debauchery, amid women, either elegantly adorned by art, or ſometimes reduced to a ſtate of nature. Women of the firſt quality, though not diſpoſed of by auction, were treated in a manner ſomewhat ſimilar; they were given as a reward to him who, in contending for them, ſhewed the greateſt ſplendour and magnificence. When any great entertainment was deſigned, the women, who were to make a part of the company, were invited a year before, that they might have time to appear in all the luſtre of beauty and of dreſs; a circumſtance which plainly proves that they did not, as ſome other nations, value the ſex only as objects of ſenſual pleaſure, but as objects which added elegance to their ſcenes of magnificence and grandeur; and, perhaps, becauſe they excelled the men in ſoftneſs and effeminacy, qualities upon which they ſet the greateſt value, and cultivated with the utmoſt aſſiduity.—Theſe people, after having been for many centuries the contempt of the univerſe, were at laſt ſhamefully driven from their country, and entirely diſperſed by the Crotonians.

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The ſame Subject continued.

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Of the Greek women.

IN the laſt chapter we finiſhed the few curſory obſervations we could make on thoſe ages which lie hid in the darkneſs of the moſt remote antiquity, we now come to theſe of the Greeks; a people whoſe fame has been ſo much trumpeted, that we are apt to annex the idea of every virtue to their name, to conſider them as highly poliſhed and civilized, and conſequently to expect that, amongſt them, the fair ſex were treated with that indulgence, and raiſed to that dignity, which they commonly enjoy in nations the fartheſt advanced in the arts of culture and refinement: But here we ſhall be much miſtaken; for though the Greeks were a people ſeverely virtuous in whatever regarded their country, they were far from being tender and humane, and hardly knew any of thoſe ſoft blandiſhments which ſmooth the aſperity of rugged male nature; and which, while they render us more agreeable to the women, are only to be acquired in their company.

IT is obſerved by an able panegyriſt for the fair, that one of the greateſt proofs of their intrinſic worth and excellence is, that the greateſt eſteem and reſpect has always been paid them by the wiſeſt and beſt of nations. Granting this to be a fact, it follows, that the Greeks forfeited one great claim to that wiſdom which has always been attributed to them; for we have good reaſon to believe that they regarded their women only as inſtruments of raiſing

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raiſing up members to the ſtate: conſidering them in the ſame cool, diſpaſſionate, and we may add, unſocial light, as they conſidered their fields which produced the corn whereby the members of that ſtate were fed. But leſt we ſhould be ſuſpected of partiality, let us attend to ſome of the proofs of what we have advanced.

Confined to their apartments.

THE animal appetite towards the other ſex, is implanted in ours by nature, and ariſes at ſight; but in order to eſteem, to regard women, we muſt do more than ſee, we muſt, by ſocial intercourſe and a mutual reciprocation of good offices, become acquainted with their worth and excellence: this, to the Greeks, was a pleaſure totally unknown; cuſtom had introduced, and law had eſtabliſhed, the mode of obliging women to live retired in their own apartments, ſcarcely ever allowing them to appear in public, or have any open intercourſe with the men; ſo that, if they had any amiable qualities, they were buried in perpetual obſcurity: even their huſbands being in ſome of the * ſtates limited as to the times and duration of the viſits made to their wives, and it being the cuſtom at meals for the two ſexes always to eat ſeparately.

THE apartments deſtined for the women, in order to keep them more private, were always in the back, and generally in the upper part of the houſe. The famous Helen is ſaid to have had her chamber in the loftieſt part of it, and ſo wretched were their dwellings, that even Penelope queen of Ulyſſes ſeems to have deſcended from hers by means of a ladder; within theſe, however, women, eſpecially ſuch as had no huſbands, whether maids or

* This was the caſe at Sparta.

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widows, were cloſely confined; the former in ſo ſtrict a manner that they could not paſs without leave from one part of the houſe to another, leſt they ſhould be ſeen; which, as we learn from the ſtory of Antigone, would have been a reflection on their honour, as well as on the care and integrity of their guardians. New-married women were almoſt as ſtrictly confined as virgins; for we find Hermione ſeverely reproved by her old duenna, for appearing out of doors; a freedom, which, ſhe tells her, was not uſually taken by women in her ſituation, and which would endanger her reputation, ſhould ſhe happen to be ſeen; and we are further informed by Menander, that the door was the utmoſt limit allowed to the freedom of a married woman: it appears, however, from ſome other authors, that after they had brought forth a child, this ſeverity was a little relaxed; but it was then owing only to the indulgence of their huſbands, who, perhaps, thought them now either more prudent, or leſs the objects of temptation; and might ſtill, if they pleaſed, retain them in the ſame rigorous confinement, as we learn from Ariſtophanes; who introduces an Athenian lady, loudly complaining, becauſe women were confined to their chambers, under lock and key, and guarded, ſays ſhe, by maſtiffs, goblins, or any thing that can frighten away admirers.

Cauſe of their confinement.

THOUGH the Grecian women lived thus ſeparated from the men, yet they were not, like thoſe of Aſia, confined to ſeraglios, and obliged to ſhare among a great number the ſcanty favours of one man. Nor does their confinement appear in ſome caſes to have been ſo much the effect of jealouſy, as of indifference; the men did not think them proper companions; and that ignorance, which is the common reſult of a recluſe life, gave them too good

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reaſon to think ſo. Nothing in Greece was held in eſtimation, but valour and eloquence; nature had diſqualified the fair ſex for both; they were therefore conſidered as mean and contemptible beings, much beneath the notice of heroes and of orators, who ſeldom favoured them with their company, unleſs prompted by nature, or by the deſire of propagating future orators and heroes like themſelves. Thus deſerted by a ſex, which ought to be the ſource of knowledge, the underſtandings of the women were but ſhallow, and their company unintereſting; a caſe which invariably happens in every country where the two ſexes have little communication with each other.

Other reſtrictions and hardſhips they ſuffered.

But confinement was not the greateſt evil which the Grecian women ſuffered; by other cuſtoms and laws they were ſtill more oppreſſed: it was not in their power to do any judicial act without the conſent of a tutor, or guardian; and ſo little power, even over themſelves, did the legiſlature devolve upon women, though ripened by age and experience, that when the father died, the ſon became the guardian of his own mother. When a woman was cited into court, ſhe was incapable of anſwering without her guardian; and therefore the words of the proclamation were, We cite A. B. and her guardian. In making a will, it was not only neceſſary that the guardian ſhould give his conſent, but that he ſhould be a party. Theſe facts ſhew, that the Greek women were under the moſt complete tutelage, whereby they were deprived of almoſt all political exiſtence; and teach us to conſider a guardian and his pupil as the ſubſtance and the ſhadow, the latter of which could not exiſt without the former. But this is not all; we have already mentioned ſome of the ſlaviſh employments to which they were put, and ſhall now add, that, in the heroic ages,

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the women did all the ſlaviſh and domeſtic offices, even ſuch as were inconſiſtent with the delicacy and modeſty of the ſex: they conducted the men to bed, dreſſed and undreſſed them, attended them while in the baths, dried and perfumed them when they came out of them; nor were theſe, and ſuch other offices, only allotted to ſervants or ſlaves, no rank was exempted from them. The princeſs Nauſſica, daughter of Alcinous, carried her own linen to the river in a chariot, and having waſhed and laid it on the bank, ſat down by it, and dined on the proviſion ſhe had brought along with her. When ſuch was the employment of their own women of rank, we cannot expect that their captives ſhould ſhare a happier fate; accordingly, we find Hector lamenting, that, ſhould Troy be taken, his wife would be condemned to the moſt ſlaviſh drudgery; and Hecuba bewailing, that, like a dog, ſhe was chained at the gate of Agamemnon.

In the ſtate of wedlock, a ſtate of all others the moſt delicate, the Lacedemonians ſeem to have been deſtitute of all the finer feelings; for, deſpiſing that principle of mutual fidelity, which in ſome degree appears to have been cheriſhed by every people only a ſingle degree removed from the rudeſt barbarity, they, without any reluctancy, borrowed and lent wives with each other; a kind of barter totally inconſiſtent with that ſympathetic union of ſouls, which always does, or ought to take place, between huſband and wife: but the matter did not end here; for, by the laws of Solon, a luſty well-made young fellow might, when he pleaſed, demand permiſſion to cohabit with the wife of any of his fellow-citizens, who was leſs handſome and robuſt than himſelf, under pretence of raiſing up children to the ſtate, who ſhould, like the father, be ſtrong and vigorous; and ſuch an unreaſonable demand, the huſband was

not

not at liberty to reject: what ſtill further ſhews how little delicacy exiſted in their connections with their wives, is their conduct in a war with the Myſſinians; when, having bound themſelves by a ſolemn oath, not to return to their own city till they had revenged the injury they had received, and the war having been unexpectedly protracted for the ſpace of ten years, they began to be afraid that a longer abſence would tend greatly to depopulate their ſtate; to prevent which, they ſent back a certain number of thoſe who had joined the army, after the above-mentioned oath had been taken, with full power to cohabit with all the wives, whoſe huſbands were abſent. Nothing can more plainly diſcover the deſpicable condition of the Grecian women: the ſtate, as a body politic, regarded them only as inſtruments of general propagation; and their huſbands indelicately acquieſced in the idea, which they never could have done, had they been actuated by any thing but animal appetite, and had not that appetite been fixed more on the ſex than the individual.

WHICHEVER way we turn us in the Grecian hiſtory, we find the moſt convincing proofs of the low condition of their women. Homer conſiders Helen, the wife of Menelaus, as of little other value than a part of the goods which were ſtolen along with her; and the reſtitution of theſe, and of her, are commonly mentioned in the ſame ſentence, in ſuch a manner, as to ſhew, that ſuch reſtitution would have been conſidered as a full reparation of the injury ſuſtained; ſo that Menelaus did not place the crime of Paris in having debauched his wife, but in having ſtolen from him to the amount of ſo much value. And the ſame author, in celebrating Penelope, the wife of Ulyſſes, for refuſing in his abſence ſo many ſuitors, does not appear to place the merit of her con-

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duct in a ſuperior regard to chaſtity, or in love to her huſband; but in preſerving to his family the dowry ſhe had brought along with her, which, on a ſecond marriage, muſt have been reſtored to her father Icarius: and though Telemachus is always repreſented as a moſt dutiful ſon, we find him reproving his mother in a manner, which ſhews that the ſex in general were not treated with ſoftneſs and delicacy, however dignified, or with whatever authority inveſted.

> Your widowed hours, apart, with female toil,
> And various labours of the loom, beguile.
> There rule, from palace cares remote and free,
> That care to man belongs, and moſt to me.

From the celebration of ſome of their public games, women were prohibited by the ſevereſt penalty: to the feſtival at Eleuſis, they were not to go in chariots: in ſome laws, they were claſſed with ſlaves; women and ſlaves were forbid to practiſe phyſic. It was a cuſtom in Greece to expoſe ſuch children as they thought themſelves not able to maintain, or likely to derive any advantage from: daughters, according to Poſſidippus, being more coſtly in their education, and leſs likely to be beneficial afterward, were more frequently treated in this manner than ſons.

> A man, though poor, will not expoſe his ſon;
> But if he's rich, will ſcarce preſerve his daughter.

A cuſtom which we ſhall have occaſion to take notice of, in the courſe of this work, as prevailing in ſeveral nations, ſunk in ignorance and barbarity. Of all the Greeks, the Thebans were the only people who had a poſitive law againſt this horrid cuſtom.

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Privileges of the Greek women.

LET us now turn our eyes to the other ſide of the picture, and take a view of the privileges beſtowed by law or cuſtom on the Greek women: though we nowhere find that they were ever admitted to public authority, nor even to ſhare, as in ſome countries, the rank and power of their huſbands; yet, in the earlier ages, they had a vote in the public aſſemblies, which was afterwards taken from them. They ſucceeded equally with brothers to the inheritance of their fathers; and to the whole of that inheritance, if they had no brothers. But to this laſt privilege was always annexed a clog, which muſt have been extremely diſagreeable to every woman of ſentiment and feeling; an heireſs was obliged, by the laws of Greece, to marry her neareſt relation, that the eſtate might not go out of the family; and this relation, in caſe of her refuſal, had a right to ſue for the delivery of her perſon, as we do for goods and chattels: but, on the other ſide, as it ſometimes happened that this claimant was old or impotent, it was provided by law, that if he did not, in a convenient time, impregnate his wife, ſhe might apply to any one ſhe pleaſed for that purpoſe.

HE who divorced his wife, was obliged either to return her dowry, or pay her ſo much per month by way of maintenance. He who raviſhed a free woman, was conſtrained in ſome ſtates to marry her, in others to pay a hundred, and in others again, a thouſand drachmas. But what reflects more honour on the Greeks than any thing we find in their behaviour toward women, is the care they took of female orphans. "He who is the next "in blood (ſays their law) to an orphan virgin, who hath no for-"tune, ſhall marry her himſelf, or ſettle a fortune upon her, ac-"cording to his quality; if there be many relations, all equally

"allied,

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"allied, all of them, according to their ſeveral qualities, ſhall "contribute ſomething towards her fortune." After all, when we impartially conſider the good and ill treatment of the Grecian women, we find that the balance was much againſt them, and may therefore conclude, that though the Greeks were eminent in arts, though they were illuſtrious in arms, in politeneſs, and elegance of manners, the higheſt pitch to which they ever arrived, was only a few degrees above ſavage barbarity.

Of the Roman women.

In the more early periods of the Roman republic, as in the infancy of almoſt all the ancient nations, we find every thing involved in fable and abſurdity; immortality and mortality hardly diſtinguiſhable from each other; heroes, demigods, and goddeſſes, performing almoſt every action, and reſiding in every grove. Such ridiculous notions, wherever we meet with them, afford the moſt infallible proofs of ignorance and barbarity, and conſtantly vaniſh in proportion to the increaſe of reaſoning and knowledge.

Agreeably to this obſervation, the earlieſt accounts of the Romans exhibit a rude and uncultivated people, but little acquainted with decency, and entire ſtrangers to that delicacy which takes place between the two ſexes in nations tolerably advanced in civilization and ſociety. Their firſt appearance, as an independent ſtate, was as an handful of robbers, or banditti; and one of the firſt of their memorable actions, was the capture of ſome young women, to enable them to raiſe up members to the ſtate they had erected: to theſe women, however, they behaved in a manner that we have ſeldom an opportunity of obſerving among a people ſo little cultivated. They treated them with ſo much kindneſs, and had the addreſs ſo to pleaſe them, that they abſolutely

lutely refuſed to be reſcued from their raviſhers; but as many of our female readers may not be acquainted with this hiſtory, we ſhall give them a ſhort ſketch of it.

Rape of the Sabine Virgins.

WHEN Romulus, the founder of Rome, had formed his infant republic, finding that he had no women, and that none of the neighbouring nations would give their daughters in marriage to men whom they conſidered as a ſet of lawleſs banditti; he was obliged by ſtratagem to procure for his citizens, what he could not obtain for them by intreaty. Accordingly, having proclaimed a ſolemn feaſt, and an exhibition of games in honour of Equeſtrian Neptune, and by that means gathered a great number of people together; on a ſignal given, the Romans, with drawn ſwords in their hands, ruſhed among the ſtrangers, and forcibly carried away a great number of their daughters to Rome. The next day Romulus himſelf diſtributed them as wives to thoſe of his citizens, who had thus by violence carried them away *. From ſo rude a beginning, and among a people ſo ſevere and inflexible as the Romans, it is not unnatural for the reader to expect to find, that women were treated in the ſame indignant, if not in a worſe manner, than they were among the nations we have already mentioned. In this, however, he will be miſtaken; it was the Romans who firſt gave to the ſex public liberty, who firſt properly cultivated their minds, and thought it as neceſſary as to adorn their bodies: among them were they firſt fitted for ſociety, and for becoming rational companions; and among them, was it firſt demonſtrated to the world, that they were capable of great actions, and deſerved a better fate than to be ſhut up in ſeraglios, and kept

* This is what we frequently find mentioned in hiſtory, by the name of the Rape of the Sabine Virgins.

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only as the pageants of grandeur, or inſtruments of ſatisfying illicit love; truths which the ſequel of the hiſtory of the Sabine women will amply confirm.

THE violent capture of theſe young women by the Romans, was highly reſented by all the neighbouring nations, and eſpecially by the Sabines, to whom the greateſt part of them belonged; they ſent to demand reſtitution of their daughters, promiſing, at the ſame time, an alliance, and liberty of intermarrying with the Romans, ſhould the demand be complied with. But Romulus not thinking it expedient to part with the only poſſible means he had of raiſing future citizens, inſtead of granting what they aſked, demanded of the Sabines, that they ſhould confirm the marriages of their daughters with the Romans. Theſe conferences, at laſt, produced a treaty of peace; and that, like many others of the ſame nature, ended in a more inveterate war. The Romans having in this gained ſome advantages, the Sabines retired; and having breathed a while, ſent a ſecond embaſſy to demand their daughters, were again refuſed, and again commenced hoſtilities. Being this time more ſucceſsful, they beſieged Romulus in his citadel of Rome, and threatened immediate deſtruction to him and all his people, unleſs their daughters were reſtored. In this alarming ſituation, Herſilia, wife of Romulus, demanded an audience of the ſenate, and laid before them a deſign, which the women had formed among themſelves, without the knowledge of their huſbands, which was, to act the part of mediators between the contending parties. The propoſal being approved, a decree was immediately paſſed, permitting the women to go on the propoſed negociation; and only requiring, that each of them ſhould leave one of her children as a ſecurity that ſhe would return; the reſt,

they

they were all allowed to carry with them, as objects which might more effectually move the compaſſion of their fathers and relations. Thus authorized, the women laid aſide their ornaments, put on mourning, and carrying their children in their arms, advanced to the camp of the Sabines, and threw themſelves at the feet of their fathers. The Sabine king, having aſſembled his chief officers, ordered the women to declare for what purpoſe they were come; which Herſilia did in ſo pathetic a manner, that ſhe brought on a conference between the chiefs of the two nations, and this conference, by her mediation, and that of the other women, ſoon ended in an amicable alliance.

Privileges of the Roman women.

As a reward for this moſt important ſervice of the Sabine women, ſeveral privileges and honourable marks of diſtinction were granted them by the ſenate; all immodeſt and licentious diſcourſes were forbid in their preſence, and no indecent objects were to be brought before them; every one was ordered to give way to them in the ſtreet. In capital caſes, they were exempted from the juriſdiction of the ordinary judges. And laſtly, their children were allowed to wear a golden ball hanging at their breaſt, and to be clothed with a particular robe, called Pretexta. But all theſe honours and privileges not being thought ſufficient, ſome time after a feſtival was inſtituted, and called Matronalia, in honour of the Sabine matrons. During this feſtival, the Roman matrons ſerved their ſlaves at table, and received preſents from their huſbands; ſacrifices were then alſo offered to Juno Lucina, to induce her to aſſiſt them in child-bearing.

Laws and cuſtoms reſtraining their liberty.

FROM a ſervice ſo ſignal, conferred by women on an infant republic, and from the peculiar notice taken of that ſervice, we would

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would naturally conclude that the Romans were then a cultivated people, and that their women were treated with all that ſoftneſs and indulgence due to the tenderneſs of their ſex. Such a concluſion, however, would be erroneous, for the Romans were at this period ſtrangers to every ſoftneſs and refinement of manners, and the honours beſtowed on the Sabine women were only ſudden and indigeſted effuſions of gratitude, which did not operate uniformly on the whole of their conduct towards a ſex that nature and obligation ought to have rendered dear to them.

THE Roman women, as well as the Greeks, were under perpetual guardianſhip, and at no age, nor in any condition, were ever truſted with the management of their own fortunes; they were in caſe of wills, and perhaps in other caſes, not admitted as evidence; every father had a power of life and death over his daughters; but this power was not reſtricted to females only, it extended to ſons as well as daughters. Sumptuary laws, generally more grievous to women than to men, as they reſtrain their moſt darling paſſions, were long in force at Rome: the Oppian law prohibited them from having more than half an ounce of gold employed in ornamenting their perſons, from wearing cloaths of divers colours, and from riding in chariots either in the city or a thouſand paces around it. They were ſtrictly forbid the uſe of wine, or even to have in their poſſeſſion the key of any place where it was kept, for either of which faults they were liable to be divorced by their huſbands; and ſo careful were the Romans in reſtraining their women from wine, that they are ſuppoſed to have firſt introduced the cuſtom of ſaluting their female relations and acquaintance, on entering into the houſe of a friend or

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a neighbour, that they might diſcover by their breath whether they had taſted any of that liquor. This ſtrictneſs, however, began in time to be relaxed, till at laſt luxury and debauchery becoming too ſtrong for every law, the women indulged themſelves in equal liberties with the men. But ſuch was not the caſe in the earlier ages of Rome, Romulus even permitted huſbands to kill their wives if they found them drinking wine; and if we may believe Valerius Maximus, Egnatius Metellus, having detected his wife drinking wine out of a caſk, actually made uſe of this permiſſion, and was by Romulus acquitted. And Fabius Pictor relates, that a Roman lady having picked the lock of a cheſt, in order to come at the key of a place where ſome wine was kept, her parents ſhut her up and ſtarved her to death.

WOMEN were liable to be divorced by their huſbands almoſt at pleaſure, provided the portion was returned which they had brought along with them. They were alſo liable to be divorced for barrenneſs, which, if it could be conſtrued into a fault, was at leaſt the fault of nature, and might ſometimes be that of the huſband. Such were the diſadvantages attending the Roman women, but they were not all that they laboured under; a few ſumptuary laws, a ſubordination to the men, and a total want of authority, do not ſo remarkably affect the ſex, as to be coldly and indelicately treated by their huſbands and lovers. Such a treatment is touching them in the tendereſt part; but ſuch, however, we have reaſon to believe, they often met with from the Romans, who had not yet learned, as in modern times, to blend the ſeverities of the patriot, and roughneſs of the warrior, with that ſoft and indulging behaviour, ſo conſpicuous in our modern patriots and heroes. But huſbands not only themſelves behaved roughly

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to their wives, they even ſometimes permitted their ſervants and ſlaves to do the ſame; the principal Eunuch of Juſtinian the Second, threatened to chaſtiſe the Empreſs, his maſter's wife, in the manner that children are chaſtiſed at ſchool, if ſhe did not obey his orders.

BUT to dwell no longer on the grievances of the Roman women. We have already mentioned ſome of their honours and privileges; and the following, which we ſhall add, will ſhew, that, upon the whole, their condition was much preferable to that of the women of any other people we have hitherto mentioned.

Honours conferred on the Roman women.

IN endeavouring to point out ſome of the particular honours conferred on the Roman ladies, in periods poſterior to theſe we have already run over, we ſhall not introduce the ſtory of Lucretia, whoſe tragical exit was productive of ſo much blood and devaſtation; nor of Virginea, whoſe end, if poſſible, ſtill more tragical, almoſt overturned the empire of Rome. Theſe effects were, perhaps, more the reſult of an honeſt indignation againſt raviſhers and murderers, than proofs of general regard paid to the ſex. Beauty in every country has had a power of commanding love, and private friendſhips between individuals of the different ſexes have every where been productive of regard; but when public honours and privileges are granted to the ſex by a legiſlative body, not under the influence of beauty nor the controul of paſſion, as was the caſe with the ſenate of Rome, they are the ſtrongeſt proofs which can poſſibly be adduced of female merit.

THE public honours conferred on the Sabine women we have already mentioned; but the Romans did not confine honorary

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rewards to them only, but indiſcriminately beſtowed them on the ſex whenever merited. They hung up the diſtaff of Tanaquil, the conſort of Tarquin, in the temple of Hercules; not only as a public reward for the proper uſe ſhe had made of it, but alſo to encourage others to follow ſo laudable an example. When Coriolanus, in revenge for ſome affront offered him at Rome, was ready at the head of a victorious army of the Volſci to lay that city in aſhes; when the tears and prayers of his friends, of the nobility, and even of the venerable ſenate, were inſufficient to divert the ſtorm; Veturia his mother, by the perſuaſion of the Roman matrons, having prevailed on him to lay aſide his reſentment; the ſenate deſired that the women engaged in this affair ſhould aſk any favour they thought proper; when, unambitious of rewards, they only begged that they might be allowed to build, at their own expence, a temple to the fortune of women. The ſenate, ſurpriſed at ſo much diſintereſtedneſs, ordered the temple to be immediately built on the very ſpot where Coriolanus had been prevailed upon to ſacrifice his reſentment to the love of his country; which being completed, Veturia was conſecrated prieſteſs. A Dictator of Rome having vowed to dedicate a golden vaſe of a certain weight to Apollo, and the ſenate not being able to procure a ſufficient quantity of gold to make it, the ladies voluntarily parted with many of their trinkets for that purpoſe. The ſenate, ſtruck with the unſolicited generoſity, decreed that funeral orations ſhould thenceforth be made for the women as well as for the men, and that they ſhould be allowed to ride in chariots at the public games.

THE ſacred function of miniſtering at the altars of the gods has, in moſt countries, been wholly reſerved for the men; but this

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this was not the caſe at Rome, they had prieſteſſes as well as prieſts, who officiated in ſeveral of their temples. Beſides theſe, they had a peculiar order of prieſteſſes, called Veſtals, who reſided in the temple of Veſta, and whoſe office was to keep the palladium *, which was conſidered as the ſecurity of the empire, and to preſerve the ſacred fire of the goddeſs in perpetual vigour. The prerogatives of this order demonſtrate not only the confidence which the Romans had in their women, but alſo the regard they paid to their religion. When the principal magiſtrates, even though conſuls, met a veſtal, they gave way to her; any inſult offered to a veſtal was puniſhed with death; if any of the order happened to meet a criminal carrying to execution, he was immediately releaſed, provided the veſtal affirmed the meeting was accidental. They were the only women whoſe evidence was received in courts of juſtice; they were the umpires of the differences which happened between perſons of the firſt rank; they were allowed the liberty of being interred in the city, a liberty ſeldom granted even to their greateſt heroes; and in their hands, as in an inviolable aſylum, were depoſited the wills and teſtaments of ſuch as were afraid that frauds and forgeries might be committed by their relations. When the deification of emperors and of heroes became faſhionable at Rome, the women ſoon alſo inſinuated themſelves into this ſpecies of honour; their ſtatues were ſet up in the temples, and public ſacrifices were offered to, and incenſe burnt before them. The higheſt honour that could be conferred on a Roman hero, who had been ſlain in the defence of his country, was to be buried in the field of Mars; an honour

* The ſtatue of Pallas, which the Romans believed would ſecure their city from being taken ſo long as it remained there.

which,

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which, in length of time, came alſo to be ſhared by illuſtrious women. Among the Romans, women generally ate and drank with the men, and in later times were even admitted to their convivial meetings; liberties, which in ſo full an extent we have not hitherto found them enjoying; they alſo ſhared the honours and even titles of their huſbands, and at one period honours of a nature not uſually beſtowed on the ſex were inſtituted for them only *.

Romans cruel to the women of conquered nations.

But amid all theſe honours, and all theſe public teſtimonies of approbation, we have reaſon to believe that the Romans ſacrificed more to merit than to love; and that while their women ſhared with them almoſt every honour and every privilege, they were in general treated at home rather with the cool eſteem of friendſhip, than with the warm indulgence of tenderneſs and affection. If the whole tenor of their conduct gives us reaſon to think that ſuch was their behaviour to their own women, we have but too many undoubted proofs to aſſure us, that their captives of the fair ſex were often treated even with the moſt horrid barbarity; their political virtue was ſo rigid and ſevere, that it never ſuffered humanity in the leaſt to interfere where the intereſt of their country was concerned. Hence, in order to aggrandize the Roman name, and ſtrike terror into conquered nations, they often dragged beauty and grandeur at the wheels of their triumphal chariots, and expoſed queens and princeſſes, without regard of rank or of ſex, to degradations, and to tortures that even a ſavage would bluſh for. Not contented with raviſhing, they alſo

* Heliogabalus gave his mother a ſeat and vote in the ſenate of Rome, and ſome time after inſtituted a female ſenate, and placed her at the head of it. The buſineſs of this ſenate was to regulate the important affairs of dreſs and faſhion; but this inſtitution did not long ſurvive its deſpicable founder: ſoon after his death it was diſſolved; nor did any ſucceeding emperor ever afterward attempt to re-eſtabliſh it.

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ſcourged the daughters of the Britiſh queen Boadicea. After they had overcome the army of the Ambrones, their women being in a fortified camp, for ſome time defended themſelves; but finding they could not be able to hold out, deſired to capitulate, and required no other condition than that their chaſtity ſhould not be violated; but even this ſingle condition was not granted by the cruel and libidinous Romans. But we will not proceed to blacken the hiſtoric page with a liſt of ſuch enormous crimes.

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The ſame Subject continued.

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THE Celtes, Gauls, Germans, and other northern nations, upon whom Tacitus and his contemporary writers ſo liberally beſtow the epithet of Barbarians, were, in ſeveral reſpects, leſs ſo than the Romans, who, at that time, thought themſelves the only poliſhed people upon the globe; the greater part of theſe nations treated their women, if not with a politeneſs, at leaſt with a regard ſuperior to that of thoſe very Romans who gave them ſo horrid an appellation.

IN Germany, when the regal dignity deſcended to a woman, they allowed her to enjoy it, and women often governed with a ſteadineſs and ſagacity which did honour to the ſex, and excited the admiration of the neighbouring nations; the greateſt heroes neither diſdained to fight under their banners, nor be regulated by their councils, as they imagined them to be endowed with a kind of oracular wiſdom, and a prudence more than human. In their treaties with one another, female hoſtages were given by the ancient Germans; and by theſe they reckoned themſelves more firmly engaged than by an equal, or even a ſuperior number of the other ſex. In their warlike excurſions, they carried their women along with them, and ſometimes even to the field of battle, where their cries and ſhouts ſerved to intimidate their enemies, and to animate their friends with martial ardour; and even ſometimes to inflame and

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ſupport them, when ready to yield to ſuperior numbers, or more ſteady diſcipline. The approbation of the fair they eſteemed as the moſt honourable reward of their bravery, and for them, as being what they valued moſt, they fought with the moſt determined reſolution. When they had turned their backs on the enemy, their wives often painted ſo pathetically the horrors of captivity, that they were prevailed upon, with double fury, to return to the charge, rather than ſubmit themſelves to ſuch indignity. A civil war having once ariſen among the Gauls, to decide the quarrel, two armies were drawn out into the field, extended front to front, and juſt ready to commence a dreadful carnage, when the women with diſhevelled hair ruſhing in between them, put a ſtop to the work of deſtruction, and had the addreſs to reconcile them to each other. From that time forward, the Gauls admitted the women to their councils, when peace or war was to be debated; and from that time alſo, ſuch differences as aroſe between them and their allies were terminated by female negociation; and, agreeably to this cuſtom, we find it ſtipulated in their treaty with Hannibal, that ſhould the Gauls have any complaint againſt the Carthaginians, the matter ſhould be ſettled by the Carthaginian general; but ſhould the Carthaginians have any complaint againſt the Gauls, it ſhould be referred to the Gauliſh women. The Goths obliged him who debauched a virgin to marry her, if ſhe was equal to him in rank; if not, he was conſtrained to give her a fortune equal to his own condition; if he could not give her ſuch a fortune, he was condemned to death; becauſe a woman thus diſhonoured, had no chance of obtaining a huſband without a fortune; and becauſe it was by marriage only that a ſtate could be properly peopled.

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To theſe proofs of the regard, and even of the veneration, which the ancient inhabitants of the North paid to their women, we ſhall add, that they conſidered them as having ſomething ſacred in their character, as endowed with a foreſight of future events, as interpreters of the Divine will in this world, and as a part of the reward of the bleſſed in the next. "The "Cimbri," ſays Strabo, "when they took the field, were ac- "companied by venerable hoary-headed propheteſſes, clothed "in long white linen robes." "A crowd of beautiful virgins," ſays the Edda *, "wait on the heroes in the hall of Odin, and "fill their cups as faſt as they empty them." It is worth remarking in this place, that many of the ancient eaſtern religions, and Mahometiſm, which was copied from them, taught, that a great part of the joys of Paradiſe conſiſted in beautiful women. But then they were to enjoy them as ſuch; whereas the Northerns were ſatisfied with having their cups quickly replenished by them: a circumſtance, which plainly ſhews, that the predominant paſſion of the Eaſt was love; that of the North, drinking.

Ancient Britiſh women how treated.

THE ancient Britons appear not to have been behind any of the other northern nations in the veneration and regard paid to their women; they had tamely ſubmitted to every reiterated evil, and to every ſpecies of oppreſſion which the cruel and avaricious Romans had laid upon them; but when theſe lawleſs deſtroyers ſcourged their queen, and raviſhed her daughters, their reſentment was kindled, they aroſe to revenge the cauſe of the ſex; and had their diſcipline been equal to their valour, they would at that time have put an end to the Roman inſults, and extirpated them from the Britiſh iſles.

* The Edda is the ſacred book of the ancient Scandinavians and other northern nations.

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Thoſe of the other northern nations.

THOUGH it appears from what has been related, that the ancient inhabitants of the North valued and eſteemed their women, yet their conduct towards them was far from being all of a piece; while they revered them as beings inſpired with a ray of the Divinity, according to the cuſtom of Aſia, from whence they originally came, they at the ſame time treated them as ſervants, or rather as ſlaves. The wives and children were not allowed to eat with the huſbands, but waited upon them at their meals, and afterward ate up what they had left. Among the ancient Danes, and ſeveral of their northern neighbours, convivial feaſting was more frequent than perhaps among any other people; almoſt every occurrence and buſineſs was productive of a feaſt, where eating and drinking was carried to the moſt abominable exceſs. But to ſuch feaſts, we have reaſon to believe, the women were only admitted as ſervants; and that they ſtood behind their huſbands and friends, ſupplying them with meat and drink, and took care of them at laſt when their drunkenneſs had rendered them incapable of doing any thing for themſelves. The German women, like thoſe of the Greeks and Romans, were under perpetual guardianſhip; but it was generally to the care of ſome perſon of prudence and experience they were committed, and not to their own ſons, as in Greece. When any perſon was murdered, the laws of their ſtates took no notice of it; the ideas of civil ſociety were not then ſo much perfected, as to conſider every individual as, in ſome degree, the property of the community; the relations of the party murdered were only ſuppoſed to have ſuſtained a loſs, and, therefore, to the relations only it belonged to revenge the death, or to agree with the murderer for a ſum of money by way of compenſation. Neither of theſe privileges were, however, veſted in the women; they were not allowed to take vengeance, becauſe, perhaps, cruelty

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and bloodſhed did not ſuit with the ſoftneſs of their nature; they were not to take the compenſation, becauſe they were conſidered as too weak and feeble to extort it.

In general, the women of the North ſeem not to have been indulged with much property. The Viſigoths were bound by a law not to give more to a wife than the tenth part of their ſubſtance. The German women anciently ſucceeded not to any inheritance, though afterwards they were permitted to ſucceed after the males of the ſame degree of kindred. But the moſt ſubordinate of all female conditions ſeems among them to have been that of a wife to her huſband. The huſband of an adultereſs was allowed to aſſemble her relations, in their preſence to cut off her hair, ſtrip her naked, turn her out of his houſe, and whip her from one end of the village to the other. A woman thus publicly expoſed could never wipe away the ſtain of ſo foul an infamy; the moſt circumſpect behaviour could never call back her loſt character, nor could any motive ever prevail on another to marry her, though youth, beauty, fortune, and every advantage, combined to allure him.

We have already mentioned, that a law among the Goths obliged a man to marry or give a portion to the woman he had debauched. Among the Angles, and many other of the northern nations, wounds and injuries were fixed by law at a certain price; and a wound given to a virgin was eſtimated at double the value which was ſet upon it when given to a man of the ſame rank. If this law originated from a ſenſe of the weakneſs and inability of the ſex to defend themſelves, it demonſtrated a legiſlature not inattentive to their intereſt: if from humanity, or from love, it

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ſhewed in the men a degree of civilization, which the hiſtories of theſe ages in many circumſtances ſeem to contradict.

THE mythology of all antiquity is full of female as well as of male deities. The Hebrews, and many of their neighbouring nations, worſhipped the Queen of Heaven; the Phœnicians adored Aſtarte; the Scythians, Apia; and the Scandinavians, Frigga, the conſort of Odin. Wherever female deities have obtained a place in the religion of a people, it is a ſign that women are of ſome conſequence; for we find in thoſe modern nations where women are held in the moſt deſpicable light, that even their deities are all of the maſculine gender. As there were in the North female deities, ſo they had prieſteſſes who miniſtered in their groves, and at their altars. The Egyptians, Phœnicians, Carthaginians, and many other of the ancients, offered to their gods human victims; ſometimes of the male, and ſometimes of the female gender: the Northerns followed their example, only with this difference, that we have reaſon to believe they never ſacrificed any females. Whether they were not thought victims of ſufficient importance to be offered to their gods; whether they ſpared them from lenity and indulgence; or from the conſideration of the loſs that population would ſuſtain by their death, is uncertain. But when we take a view of the whole of their conduct towards the ſex, we are much inclined to attribute it to indulgence and affection.

As the inhabitants of the North were not diſtinguiſhed by a quickneſs of ſenſibility, as they devoted moſt of their time to a paſſion for arms, and to the pleaſures of the table, we may conclude that love held no violent dominion over them; and yet they

eſteemed and regarded their women, forming, in this particular, a ſtriking contraſt to the Aſiatics and other ſouthern people, who have ever been diſtinguiſhed by the warmeſt love, entirely diveſted of the ſmalleſt degree of regard or eſteem. An Aſiatic, while he approaches his miſtreſs as if ſhe were a divinity, treats her as a criminal, and conſidering her as entirely made for his pleaſures; he is at the ſame time her tyrant and her ſlave: while the Northerns did not ſeem to have looked on the ſex as deſtined for their pleaſures, ſo much as for their convenience and aſſiſtance: they did not view them as the ſlaves of their power, and the panders of their luſt, but as their friends and companions; nor did they approach them with the fawning ſubmiſſion of inferiors, and at the ſame time treat them with the haughty diſreſpect of ſuperiors.

Treatment of women in the middle ages.

In tracing the hiſtory of the treatment and condition of women downwards from the periods already reviewed, our chief buſineſs will be among the deſcendants of thoſe northern nations, of whom we have been now ſpeaking; who at length diſſatisfied with the cold and barren regions they inhabited, where, on a ſcanty and hard-earned pittance, they dragged out a miſerable exiſtence; and convinced, as every uncultivated people were, that the ſword gave a right to whatever they could conquer by it; ſet out in ſwarms towards the ſouth, and in proceſs of time over-ran all Europe, propagated their race, and diffuſed their manners and cuſtoms as far as they extended their arms.

We have already ſeen, that they carried their wives and children with them into the field; which being a ſcene not only adapted to the growth of riot and debauchery, but where theſe vices may

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more eaſily elude the vigilance of juſtice; many of the ſtricteſt laws became neceſſary for their preſervation, and ſeveral of this nature were enacted by the Franks. When in the field, their operations were from time to time ſettled in a council, of which their wives made a part; and when in danger of being defeated, they were more afraid of their reproaches than of the ſwords of their enemies. The men, conſtantly employed in war or in drinking, had neither time nor inclination to acquire uſeful knowledge. The women, more at leiſure, from the little they became acquainted with, were by the men conſidered as oracles: they were ſuppoſed to be able to interpret dreams, and had actually learned the virtues of a few ſimples. Hence both virgins and matrons were employed in dreſſing the wounds of their lovers and huſbands. With all theſe acquiſitions, at that time ſo extraordinary as well as uſeful; with all that majeſtic beauty, for which they were ſo famous in the ſongs of their bards; is it any wonder, that the daughters of the North were the firſt who inſpired the men with ſentimental feeling, and with ideas little ſhort of adoration? But ſuch is the nature of man, eſpecially when he is but a few degrees removed from barbarity, that while he adores a woman for her beauty, he ſcruples not to attack and ruin her virtue. Such was not the complexion of the times we have already delineated; but it became the complexion of theſe we are now conſidering. An univerſal ſpirit of piracy and emigration had crept into the North: one half of its inhabitants were conſtantly wandering in queſt of new adventures, and of new ſettlements. Wanderers, who have neither property nor poſſeſſions to ſerve as hoſtages for their good behaviour, are generally licentious in their manners: hence it became neceſſary for thoſe who had acquired ſettlements, not only to ſecure their property, but alſo their wives and children,

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from theſe lawleſs wanderers, in caſtles, and in ſtrong fortifications. CHAP. VII.

In this manner women became firſt ſubject to a ſpecies of confinement in the North, not becauſe they were, as is alleged in the South, wicked and libidinous, but becauſe they were beautiful, weak and defenceleſs. This confinement, however, not being the effect of jealouſy, as in Aſia, but of prudence, and deſire of ſecuring their women from the inſults of licentious banditti; when a woman found a lover, or a huſband, to protect her from the rudeneſs and barbarity of the times, ſhe could then venture abroad with impunity in his company. Hence every woman naturally wiſhed to engage ſuch a champion; and every man of ſpirit, fond of the honour ariſing from it, as naturally inliſted himſelf in the ſervice. And in this manner aroſe the inſtitution of chivalry; an inſtitution, which, though it owed its birth to chance and the neceſſity of the times, made ſo rapid a progreſs, that in a little while it was ſufficient for a fair lady to have it publicly known, that ſuch a gallant warrior was her declared champion, and would revenge every wrong done to her, whether in his preſence or abſence: this enlarged ſtill the circle of her liberty, and more reſtrained the hand of inſult and violence.

Beſides the title a young warrior had to the approbation and favour of her whom he thus defended, there was another, and, if poſſible, a ſtill more prevailing motive, the love of glory; in theſe times, the moſt anxiouſly coveted, and moſt intimately connected with ſuch generous and diſintereſted actions as defending the weak and reſcuing the oppreſſed. All theſe conſiderations prompted the youthful warrior to take upon him an office, which, Cauſes which prompted the men ſo ſtrongly to protect the women.

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while it flattered his love, at the ſame time, by its acquiſition of fame, no leſs fed and nouriſhed his vanity: and as the man acquired honour, and the name of valour, by undertaking to defend an innocent and helpleſs woman; ſo the woman acquired an additional luſtre, and the name of beauty, by being thus diſtinguiſhed by a gallant champion. Thus the honour and intereſt of the two ſexes became mutually blended together, and they reflected additional luſtre and reputation upon each other; a truth to which all the hiſtorical records of theſe times bear the moſt ample teſtimony.

IT is not a little remarkable, that in the ſame periods in which women were gradually riſing into conſequence in one part of Europe, they ſhould be loſing it altogether in another. While the ſpirit of chivalry made them objects almoſt of adoration in the North, Mahomet had eſtabliſhed a religion in Aſia, which diveſted them almoſt of every privilege, and of all political conſequence: this religion, brought over into Europe, and eſtabliſhed in the Weſt by the conquering arms of his ſucceſſors, not only ſunk the power of beauty almoſt to nothing, but condemned the whole of the ſex to perpetual ſubordination and impriſonment.

THIS is a ſtriking proof, that the actions of men are regulated by no fixed principle: but, in the ages we are conſidering, another not leſs ſtriking is, that human nature endeavoured to aſſume the moſt contradictory appearances; it endeavoured to blend the meek and forgiving ſpirit of the religion of Jeſus, with the fierce and intolerant ſpirit of war and bloodſhed. It endeavoured to mix the ſoft ſentiments of love, with the revengeful dictates of affronted honour; and the ſame tender ſentiment which bound a lover to his miſtreſs,

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inſtigated him, in the moſt ſavage manner, to cut the throats of all thoſe who openly profeſſed either to love or hate her. In ſhort, nothing had at this time acquired any conſiſtency: religion was a mixture of paganiſm and ſuperſtition, and law was a compound of weakneſs and injuſtice. While the pilgrim travelled to Jeruſalem to obtain forgiveneſs of his ſins, he was adding daily to the load, by pillaging and debauchery on the way. Religion, thus reduced to penance and ceremony, was too weak to combat the paſſions; and law, if ridiculous in its modes of inveſtigation, was ſtill more conſpicuous for being feeble in its power of execution. In ſuch a criſis, ſomething diſtinct from both became neceſſary. The men had already begun to glory in being the protectors of ſuch women, as they were attached to by love and friendſhip: it was but carrying the idea one ſtep farther, from being the champion of a ſingle woman, to become the champion of the whole ſex, and thereby eſtabliſh a more complete ſyſtem of chivalry; a thing which actually happened, after the ſpirit of cruſading had been entirely obliterated by a repetition of unſucceſsful attempts.

Such is the imperfection of our nature, that to chance and neceſſity we owe the far greater part of our uſeful diſcoveries, as alſo the further improvement of ſuch as are already but imperfectly known. This was the caſe with chivalry: it originated from love, honour, and the neceſſity of defending women in the times of lawleſs depredation, and had at firſt for its object the defence of one woman only: afterward it extended to the protection of the whole ſex; and by degrees ſtretching itſelf ſtill wider, its object became diſtreſſed innocence, wherever it was found ſuffering by the hard hand of injuſtice and oppreſſion.

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Arrived at this period, it was conſidered as the moſt honourable and exalted of all profeſſions; was eagerly courted by all ranks of mankind; nor were any candidates, however elevated in their ſtation, admitted into it, without the fulleſt credentials of valour, honour and probity, or a long train of previous diſcipline; and even the admiſſion itſelf was calculated to inſpire a love of glory, and of benevolence; it was performed at the altar by ceremonies no leſs awful than pompous, and well calculated to inſtil into the mind of the young hero, the moſt enthuſiaſtic love of honour, diſintereſtedneſs, and truth.

Effects of chivalry.

The effects of this inſtitution, which at laſt became ſo ridiculouſly whimſical, as to be finally laughed out of the world by the inimitable Cervantes, were in the beginning highly beneficial to ſociety: even war was diveſted of half its horrors, when it was carried on by men trained up in the principles of honour and humanity; weakneſs, which before had every thing to fear from power, and hardly any protection by law, now began to enjoy itſelf in ſecurity, when it found ſtrength and fidelity engaged to defend it; and as weakneſs was more peculiarly the lot of women, they were alſo objects of the peculiar care and attention of this inſtitution. Hence they now began to feel a conſequence to which they had hitherto been ſtrangers; they were politely treated by all, becauſe it was known that their cauſe was the cauſe of chivalry. They were approached with ſubmiſſion by the brave; they were the judges even of bravery itſelf, and entruſted with the diſtribution of the rewards beſtowed on it at public tournaments; where a ſmile of approbation on the knight to whom they delivered them, was often conſidered by him as a greater reward than all the glory he had acquired by his invincible arm. The men conſidered tournaments as

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the theatres where they were to gain applauſe; and lovers, as thoſe of acquiring the eſteem of the fair. "Nothing (ſays a French "hiſtorian) was longed for by the ladies with ſo much impatience; "and this not ſo much from the pleaſure of beholding a magni-"ficent ſpectacle, as from the glory of preſiding there: it was "by them that the prize of theſe ſhows was always diſtributed; "they were the ſoul and capital ornament of them: to animate "the courage of the champions, they uſed to give them a token, "which was ſometimes a ſcarf, a veil, a coif, a ſleeve, a brace-"let, a knot, a detached piece of their attire, and ſometimes a "curious piece of work of their own doing; and with theſe, the "knight decorated the top of his helmet or of his ſpear, his "ſhield, his coat of arms, or ſome other part of his armour."

To ſuch a pitch of enthuſiaſtic veneration of the fair ſex did the inſtitution of chivalry carry the ages in which it flouriſhed, that the leaſt contemptuous word uttered concerning any of them, diſ-qualified a knight for the duties and privileges of his profeſſion: and a lady having cauſe of complaint againſt a knight, uſed to touch the helmet or ſhield of his arms, as a token of applying to the judges, for a trial of his crime; when, after proper inquiry, if the delinquency was proved, the hapleſs culprit immediately ſuffered the penalty of excluſion, and could never again be re-ſtored to his dignity, but by the interceſſion of the fair, and the moſt ſolemn promiſes of better behaviour for the future. As the greateſt part of the nobility and gentry were, in the times we are conſidering, of the order of chivalry, this inſtitution was in that order a ſufficient barrier againſt indecent liberties and ſcandal-ous reports. But the lower orders of men were not to be bound by the ſilken cords of honour: to keep them, therefore, within

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the limits preſcribed by decency, other motives were deviſed: the laws of the Thuringians ordained, that he who ſtole the clothes of a woman while bathing, or at any time threw dirty water upon her, ſhould be ſeverely fined; and that all compoſitions for injuries ſhould be doubled, when the injury was done to a woman. The laws of the Franks enacted, that he who ſqueezed the hand of a free woman ſhould pay fifteen ſols, twice as much if he laid hold of her arm, and four times as much if he touched her breaſt. Theſe were powerful reſtraints on indecorum; and though they ſtrongly mark the character of the times, yet they ſhew the influence of women, or rather, perhaps, the attention of the men to preſerve their delicacy, as well as chaſtity, from every rude invader.

ARTS, ſciences, and learning had, at the ſubverſion of the Roman empire, been almoſt totally eradicated; a people brought up to obtain every thing by the ſword, had no idea of gaining a ſubſiſtence by the ſtill peaceful means of labour and œconomy. Learning, and every art thereon depending, was for ſeveral centuries deſpiſed, as mean and contemptible; and a gentleman who had ſtooped to become a ſcholar, or to learn any thing uſeful in civil life, was conſidered as having degraded himſelf for ever. Among people thus circumſtanced, nothing was ſo difficult as to make any improvement: accordingly we find, that many of the middle ages were more ſtationary than, perhaps, any period in the hiſtory of mankind.

Other cauſes which gave freſh importance to women.

AMONG the nations who conquered the Roman empire the Chriſtian religion had been early introduced; but its peaceful precepts, and even all the coercive powers with which it was armed,

armed, were but feeble and unavailing, when oppoſed to cuſtoms ſanctified by time, and to minds grown haughty and intolerant by ſucceſs; and it was many ages before it could tame that wild and romantic rage for fighting, with or without cauſe, for which the inhabitants of the north had been ſo remarkably diſtinguiſhed. This religion had, however, another good effect: differences of opinion aroſe concerning it; diſputes were carried on to decide theſe differences; diſputes neceſſarily gave riſe to emulation, and emulation to ſome degree of learning. When the faculties of the human mind have been exerted on a few ſubjects of enquiry, theſe ſubjects begin to multiply; and ſtill as they increaſe, the avidity of the mind in purſuing them increaſes alſo: hence, in ſome meaſure, we may ſee the reaſon, why, toward the beginning of the twelfth century, learning began to be cultivated with ſo much aſſiduity, though it had been totally neglected before. With the revival of learning, a new and more rational importance was added to women: their former importance had been derived from ſuperſtition, and a wild and romantic ſpirit of honour: their preſent, began to erect itſelf on the foundation of tenderneſs and ſenſe. Whatever tends to aggrandize the mind, and to add to the ſtock of knowledge and ſenſibility, is in favour of the fair ſex, and makes ours laviſh freſh endearments and freſh dignities upon them. Accordingly, in tracing the hiſtory of the middle ages a little downwards, we ſhall find that women, by the remains of chivalry, and the introduction of real politeneſs, arrived at a conſequence to which they never attained in any other period.

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THE profeſſors of the Chriſtian religion, one ſect only excepted *, never admitted women to the dignity of the prieſthood;

* The Quakers.

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but in the times we are ſpeaking of, they made great ſtrides toward it. While Charlemagne ſwayed the ſceptre in France, confeſſion was conſidered as ſo abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation, that, in ſeveral caſes, and particularly at the point of death, when no prieſt or man could be had, it was by the church allowed to be made to a woman. And in the ſixteenth century, it was no uncommon thing for church-livings, the revenues of abbeys, and even of biſhoprics, to be given away with young ladies as a marriage-portion. Thus women exerciſed a kind of ſacerdotal function; and though they did not actually officiate at the altar, they enjoyed what many of the prieſts themſelves would have been glad of; the emoluments of the altar, without the drudgery of its ſervice.

When any material difference happened between man and man, or when one accuſed another of a crime, the deciſion, according to ancient cuſtom, eſtabliſhed by law, was, to be by ſingle combat, or by the ordeal trial; from both of which ridiculous manners of appealing to heaven, women were exempted. When a man had ſaid any thing that reflected diſhonour on a woman, or accuſed her of a crime, ſhe was not obliged to fight him to prove her innocence; the combat would have been unequal; nor was ſhe obliged to ſubmit to the ordeal trial; it was inconſiſtent with the delicacy of the female character and conſtitution; but ſhe might chuſe a champion to fight in her cauſe, or expoſe himſelf to the horrid trial, in order to clear her reputation; ſuch champions were generally ſelected from her lovers or friends; but if ſhe fixed upon any other, ſo high was the ſpirit of martial glory, and ſo eager the thirſt of defending the weak and helpleſs ſex, that we meet with no inſtance of a champion ever having refuſed to

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fight for, or undergo whatever cuſtom required in defence of the lady who had honoured him with the appointment. To this we may add another motive; he who had refuſed, muſt inevitably have been branded with the name of coward; and ſo deſpicable was the condition of a coward, in theſe times of general heroiſm, that death itſelf appeared the moſt preferable choice; nay, ſuch was the rage of fighting for women, that it became cuſtomary for thoſe, who could not be honoured with the deciſion of their real quarrels, to create fictitious ones concerning them, in order to create alſo a neceſſity of fighting. Thus when, from its primitive laudable intention, of ſuccouring the diſtreſſed, chivalry had degenerated to a kind of finical fighting madneſs, it was no uncommon thing for a knight to poſt himſelf in ſome public place, and there, by his doughty weapons, and formidable appearance, force every paſſenger, either to acknowledge the ſuperior charms of his Dulcinea, or fight him on the ſpot. The latter of which ſeldom happened, unleſs, perchance, he met with ſome perſon as mad as himſelf.

HOWEVER much this may have the air and appearance of romantic fiction, it is, nevertheleſs, verified by a number of hiſtorical facts. Nor was fighting for the ladies confined to ſingle inſtances, crouds of gallants entered the liſts againſt each other; and even kings called out their ſubjects, at the commands of their miſtreſſes, to ſhew their love to them, by cutting the throats of their neighbours, who had not in the leaſt offended them. In the fourteenth century, when the counteſs of Blois, and the widow of Montfort, were at war againſt each other, a conference had been agreed on, upon pretence of ſettling a peace, but in reality to appoint a combat, for deciding which of the two ladies was the

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moſt handſome: inſtead of negociating, they ſoon challenged each other; and Beaumanoir, who was at the head of the Britons, publicly declared, that they fought from no other motive than to ſee by the victory, who had the faireſt miſtreſs. In the fifteenth century, we find an anecdote of this kind ſtill more extraordinary. John duke de Bourbonnois publiſhed a declaration, that he would go over to England, with ſixteen knights, and there fight it out, in order to avoid idleneſs, and merit the good graces of his miſtreſs: and, to crown all, James IV. of Scotland having, in all tournaments, profeſſed himſelf knight to queen Anne of France, ſhe ſummoned him to prove himſelf her true and valorous champion, by taking the field in her defence, againſt his brother-in-law, Henry VIII. of England. He obeyed the romantic mandate; and the two nations bled to feed the vanity of a woman. Warriors, when ready to engage, even invoked the aid of their miſtreſſes, as poets do that of the Muſes. If they fought valiantly, it reflected honour on the Dulcineas they adored; but if daſtardly, they turned their backs on their enemies; the poor ladies were diſhonoured for ever. However different in their natures are love and fighting, the former was then the moſt prevailing motive to the latter. The famous Gaſton de Foix, who commanded the French troops at the battle of Ravenna, took advantage of this foible of his army; he rode from rank to rank, calling by name his officers, and even ſome of his private men, recommending to them their country, and their honour; and, above all, to ſhew what they could do for the love of their miſtreſſes. The ſame ſpirit which led the men to ſo extravagant an adoration of the women, when in happineſs and proſperity, dictated to them, that even their puniſhments, when abſolutely neceſſary, ſhould not offend againſt decency. In the ninth century, women, by the laws of Ken-

neth, king of Scots, were puniſhed by drowning, or burying alive.

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Reverſe of this picture.

FROM what has been now related, many of our fair readers may, perhaps, imagine, that in the times we have been delineating, women were more completely happy, than in any other period of the world; but this was not in reality the caſe; cuſtom, which governs all things with the moſt abſolute ſway, had, through a long ſucceſſion of years, given her ſanction to ſuch combats as were undertaken, either to defend the innocence, or diſplay the beauty of women. Cuſtom, therefore, either obliged a man to fight for a woman who deſired him, or marked the refuſal with eternal infamy; but cuſtom did not oblige him in every other part of his deportment, to behave to this woman, or to the ſex in general, with that reſpect and politeneſs, which have happily diſtinguiſhed the character of more modern times. The ſame man, who, in the middle ages, would at the command, or for the defence of a woman, have encountered giants, or gigantic difficulties, had but little idea of adding to her happineſs, by ſupplying her with the comforts and elegancies of life; and would have thought himſelf affronted, had ſhe aſked him to ſtoop and eaſe her of a part of that domeſtic ſlavery, which almoſt in every country falls to the lot of women. But, beſides, men had in thoſe ages nothing but that kind of romantic gallantry to recommend them; ignorant of letters, of arts, ſciences, and of every thing that refines human-nature, they were in every thing, where gallantry was not concerned, rough and unpoliſhed in their manners and behaviour: their time was ſpent in drinking, war, gallantry, and idleneſs; and in their hours of relaxation, they were but little in company with their women; and when they were,

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the indelicacies of the carouſal, or the cruelties of the field, were almoſt the only ſubjects they had to talk of. Hence they could not be proper companions for a ſex, who, ſhrinking with reluctance from indelicacy and barbarity, generally turn their thoughts to ſofter ſubjects.

In the ſixth century, while the perſons and characters of women were defended with a romantic enthuſiaſm, incredible in our days, they were, at the ſame time, conſidered as beings contaminated with a certain degree of pollution; which, at particular periods, was ſo great, that it rendered every thing unclean which they approached; hindered the operation of medicines, the effects of churning and brewing, and even ſtopped the growth of vegetables. The ſureſt road to paradiſe was to abſtain from women; they were not ſuffered to approach the altar, nor to touch the pall which covered it, unleſs when, by the prieſts, it was delivered to them to be waſhed. The euchariſt was too holy to be touched by their naked hands; they were, therefore, ordered by the canons of the church, to have a white linen glove upon the hand into which they received it.

From the ſubverſion of the Roman empire, to the fourteenth or fifteenth century, women ſpent moſt of their time alone; almoſt entire ſtrangers to the joys of ſocial life; they ſeldom went abroad, but to be ſpectators of ſuch public diverſions and amuſements as the faſhion of the times countenanced. Francis the Firſt was the firſt who introduced women on public days to court; before his time, nothing was to be ſeen at any of the courts of Europe, but long-bearded politicians, plotting the deſtruction of the rights and liberties of mankind; and warriors clad

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in complete armour, ready to put their plots in execution. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, elegance had ſcarcely any exiſtence, and even cleanlineſs was hardly conſidered as laudable. The uſe of linen was not known; and the moſt delicate of the fair ſex wore woollen ſhifts. In Paris, they had meat only three times a week; and one hundred livres (about five pounds) was a large portion for a young lady. The better ſort of citizens uſed ſplinters of wood, and rags dipped in oil, inſtead of candles; which, in thoſe days, were a rarity hardly to be met with. Wine was only to be had at the ſhops of the apothecaries, where it was ſold as a cordial; and to ride in a two-wheeled cart, along the dirty rugged ſtreets, was reckoned a grandeur of ſo enviable a nature, that Philip the Fair, prohibited the wives of citizens from enjoying it. In the time of Henry VIII. of England, the peers of the realm carried their wives behind them on horſeback, when they went to London; and, in the ſame manner, took them back to their country-ſeats, with hoods of waxed linen over their heads, and wrapped in mantles of cloth to ſecure them from the cold. Many of thoſe things, we now ſuppoſe, muſt have been hard and diſagreeable to the delicacy of female nature. Cuſtom, however, muſt have reconciled them to what would appear to us almoſt intolerable. But there was one misfortune, even beyond the power of cuſtom to alleviate; they were in perpetual danger of being accuſed of witchcraft, and ſuffering all the cruelties and indignities of a mob, inſtigated by ſuperſtition and enthuſiaſm; or being condemned by laws, which were at once a diſgrace to humanity and to ſenſe; even the bloom of youth and beauty, could not ſave from torture, and from death; but when age and wrinkles attacked a woman, if any thing uncommon happened in her neighbourhood,

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bourhood, ſhe was almoſt ſure of atoning with her life, for a crime which ſhe never committed.

WHEN we take a retroſpective view of theſe ſketches, when we compare the times in which women were only treated with romantic gallantry, and ſtrangers almoſt to every enjoyment which did not flow from that ſource; with theſe, in which they ſhare our friendſhip, and partake of almoſt all our joys, we cannot heſitate a moment to declare, that the preſent condition of the fair ſex, every thing impartially conſidered, is greatly preferable to what it was while they were approached as demigoddeſſes, and in the ſcale of political ſociety treated as cyphers.

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The ſame Subject continued.

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IN the laſt chapter, we traced the condition of women down almoſt to our own times, and ſhall now reſume the ſubject, by endeavouring to give ſome account of the preſent rank and conſequence of the ſex. But as it would be a taſk much too tedious, and ſubject us to many uſeleſs repetitions, to conſider this ſubject in every particular ſtate and kingdom of the world, we ſhall divide it into three diſtinct heads. In the firſt, we ſhall treat of the moſt ſavage and uncultivated ſtates of human life. In the next, of thoſe holding a middle degree between barbarity and cultivation. And in the laſt, of thoſe where civil ſociety is arrived to the greateſt perfection.

MAN, in that rude and uncultivated ſtate in which he originally appears in all countries, before he has been formed by ſociety, and inſtructed by experience, is an animal, differing but little from the wild beaſts that ſurround him; like them, ſo great a part of his time is employed in procuring food, that he has but little left for any other purpoſe; and like them too, his ideas ſeldom extend farther than to a few ſenſual gratifications, in which he indulges without reaſon, and without œconomy: thoughtleſs of the wants and hardſhips of to-morrow, and, conſequently, but ill provided againſt them. Among his few ſenſual gratifications,

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we may reckon the pleaſure ariſing from his commerce with the other ſex: if, in ſavage life, we can call ſuch commerce a pleaſure, where, entire ſtrangers to every reciprocal affection, and intellectual feeling ariſing therefrom, men are totally indifferent what ſentiments their female partners entertain of them, provided they ſubmit tamely to ſatisfying their appetites; and where women regard the men as lords and maſters, whom, in all things, they are obliged implicitly to obey.

Of women in ſavage life.

As women are, by nature, weaker than men, their rank and condition muſt every where be invariably regulated, by the eſteem and regard of that ſex. The eſteem and regard of the men muſt be founded on their own ſuſceptibility of nature; and that ſuſceptibility muſt be called forth into action, by the mental qualifications and perſonal beauties of the women. In ſavage life, unleſs when urged by revenge, or delighted with the chace, men are dull, phlegmatic, and almoſt deſtitute of ſuſceptibility: women have hardly any mental qualifications; nurſed in dirt and ſlovenlineſs, with but little ornament, and ſtill leſs art in diſpoſing of it; burnt with the ſun, and bedaubed with greaſe, they are objects rather of diſguſt than deſire; hence they are not the objects of love, but of animal appetite only; are ſeldom admitted to any diſtinguiſhing rank, and as ſeldom exempted from any diſtinguiſhing ſlavery.

As in ſavage ſtates, where hunting, fiſhing, and war are the only employments, vigorous exertions of ſtrength and courage are neceſſary: were women ſufficiently endowed with theſe, they might ſupply every deficiency, and greatly enhance their value in the eyes of the men. By theſe, however, they can conciliate no

affection, nor arife to any conſequence; they are qualities denied them by nature, and they cannot reap the fruit of what ſhe has not planted. In civilized countries, women have a thouſand arts to ſupply this deficiency of ſtrength and courage, and maintain a balance of power againſt the men; arts which, with a tolerable aſſiſtance from nature, they have brought to ſuch perfection, that they can often engage the heart in their favour, while the head is againſt them: but in ſavage life, caſt as it were in the lap of naked nature, expoſed to every hardſhip, with every bleak wind of heaven blowing on their head, their forms are but little engaging; with nothing that can be called culture, their latent qualities, if they have any, are like the diamond while incloſed in the rough flint, incapable of ſhewing any luſtre: thus deſtitute of every thing by which they can excite love, or acquire eſteem; deſtitute of beauty to charm, or art to ſooth, the tyrant man; they are by him deſtined to perform every mean and ſervile office, a fate which conſtantly attends the weak, where power and not reaſon dictates the law. In this the American and other ſavage women differ widely from thoſe of Aſia, who, if they are deſtitute of the qualifications neceſſary to gain eſteem, have beauty, ornament, and the art of exciting love.

AMONG the brute animals all are equal, and ſuperior ſtrength only can acquire ſuperior power: thus the bull or the ſtag who has beaten the whole herd, in conſequence becomes their leader. Exactly the ſame thing takes place among ſavages; he who has given the moſt ſignal proofs of his courage and ſtrength, aſſumes the right of being chief of the warriors of his own tribe or nation; a ſituation in which he is often not diſtinguiſhed by perſonal ornaments, or by that pageantry and ſhew, in Europe,

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and Aſia reckoned ſo neceſſary an appendage of authority, but by the authority itſelf. But this right, however firmly he was eſtabliſhed in it, does not deſcend to any of his family: if his ſon aſpires at it, he muſt acquire it in the ſame manner as his father. Their women, as we have hinted above, being by nature diſqualified from arriving at ſuperior eminence in war, are, conſequently, for ever debarred from arriving at ſuperior rank or power. In civilized countries, a woman acquires ſome power by being the mother of a numerous family, who obey her maternal authority, and defend her honour and her life. But even as a mother, a female ſavage gains little; her children daily accuſtomed to ſee their father treat her nearly as a ſlave, ſoon begin to imitate his example, and either pay little regard to her authority, or ſhake it off altogether. Of this the young Hottentots afford a remarkable proof; the boys are brought up by their mothers till about the age of puberty, when they are taken from them, and with ſeveral ceremonies initiated into the ſociety of the men; after which it is reckoned manly for them to take the earlieſt opportunity of returning to the hut of their mother, and beating her in the moſt barbarous manner, to ſhew that they are now out of her juriſdiction: nor is this a private act, for ſhould the mother complain to the men of the Kraal, they would only applaud the boy, for ſhewing ſo laudable a contempt of the ſociety and authority of women.

Slaviſh condition of ſavage women.

To ſupport this ſingle evidence of the wretched condition of women in ſavage life, we have unhappily too many collateral proofs. The moſt rude and barbarous ſtates of human exiſtence, are theſe employed wholly in fiſhing, hunting, and war; and wherever we find the men altogether employed in this manner, we find the women either totally neglected, or deſtined to every

ſlaviſh,

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ſlaviſh, and to every laborious office. In the Brazils, women are obliged to follow their huſbands to war, and, ſupplying the place of beaſts of burden, to carry their children, proviſions, hammocks, and every thing wanted in the field, on their backs. And in the iſthmus of Darien, they ſend their women along with warriors and travellers, to anſwer every purpoſe of our baggage-horſes.

In every deſpotic ſtate ſlavery is a chain; the prince at the head of it oppreſſes his courtiers, they oppreſs the inferior officers, the inferior officers oppreſs the whole of the ſubjects, and every ſubject oppreſſes the women; and ſo contemptible is the ſex, in ſome countries, that even an alliance with the firſt deſpot of it confers on them neither dignity nor privilege. The ſovereign of Giaga in Africa does not exempt his own wives from the ſlaviſh cuſtoms of the country; one carries his bow, another his arrows, a third his proviſions, &c.; and when he eats or drinks, they are obliged all to fall down on their knees in token of reſpect. The wives and daughters of his ſubjects are condemned in the fields to toil along with the ſlaves, while the men, not leſs cruel than idle, many times to ſtimulate them to labour, beſtow an equal degree of correction upon both. Mamood the Second, emperor of Hindoſtan, at that time one of the richeſt and moſt extenſive monarchies on the globe, contrary to the cuſtom of his country, had only one wife, whom he obliged to do every part of his houſehold drudgery. One day having complained, that ſhe had burnt her fingers in baking his bread, and deſired that he would allow her a maid to aſſiſt her, "I am," ſaid he, "only a "truſtee for the ſtate, and determined not to burden it with "needleſs expences;" a ſpeech more adapted to the patriotic pride of a Greek or Roman, than to the luxurious effeminacy of the

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the East; as it demonſtrated, that every ſpark of love, and even of humanity, were loſt in attention to his country.

THE fondneſs of a woman for her offspring is ſo remarkable, that in Scripture it is repreſented as the moſt powerful of all human feelings: "Can a woman forget her ſucking child?" Yet, to ſuch a degree is the ill-uſage of the ſex carried in ſome ſavage countries, that it even obliterates this feeling, and induces them to deſtroy the female children of their own body, that they may thereby ſave them from that wretchedneſs to which they themſelves are ſubject. Father Joſeph Gumilla, reproving one of the female inhabitants of the banks of the Oronooka, for this inhuman crime, received the following anſwer: "I wiſh to God, Father, I wiſh "to God, that my mother had, by my death, prevented the ma- "nifold diſtreſſes I have endured, and have yet to endure "as long as I live; had ſhe kindly ſtifled me in my birth, I "ſhould not have felt the pain of death, nor the numberleſs "other pains to which life has ſubjected me. Conſider, Father, "our deplorable condition, our huſbands go to hunt with their "bows and arrows, and trouble themſelves no farther; we are "dragged along with one infant at our breaſt, and another in a "baſket: they return in the evening without any burden, we "return with the burden of our children; and though tired with "long walking, are not allowed to ſleep, but muſt labour the "whole night in grinding maize to make chica for them: they "get drunk, and in their drunkenneſs beat us, draw us by the "hair of the head, and tread us under foot: and what have we "to comfort us for ſlavery, perhaps of twenty years?—A young "wife is brought in upon us, and permitted to abuſe us and our "children. Can human nature endure ſuch tyranny?—What-

"kindneſs

" kindneſs can we ſhew to our female children, equal to that of " relieving them from ſuch ſervitude, more bitter a thouſand " times than death? I repeat again, Would to God, my mo- " ther had put me under ground the moment I was born *!" Perhaps this complaint may be a little exaggerated; but ſhould even the great outlines of it be true, they fully evince the deplorable condition of ſavage women: and that they may be true, appears from many ſimilar inſtances among barbarous nations.

The Greenlanders, who live moſtly upon ſeals, think it ſufficient to catch and bring them on ſhore, and would rather almoſt ſubmit to ſtarve, than aſſiſt their women in dragging the cumbrous animals home, in ſkinning, or in dreſſing them. In ſome parts of America, when the men kill any game in the woods, they fix a mark to a tree, at the root of which they lay it, and travelling

* Shocking as this deſcription may appear, it is greatly exceeded by two others exhibited by the Abbe Raynal, in his Hiſtory of the European Settlements; the one by the Spaniards, and the other by the French and Engliſh. We have thought proper to mention them in a note, as they are practiſed by people whom we do not claſs among ſavages, and therefore we cannot, with ſo much propriety, inſert them in the text. Speaking of the firſt ſettlement of St. Domingo, " The natives, ſays he, were indiſcriminately chained together like beaſts; thoſe who ſunk under their burdens, were compelled to riſe by blows. No intercourſe paſſed between the ſexes but by ſtealth; the men periſhed in the mines, and the women in the fields, which they cultivated with their weak hands. Their conſtitutions, already exhauſted with exceſſive labour, were ſtill further impaired by an unwholeſome and ſcanty diet; the mothers expired with hunger and fatigue, preſſing their dead or dying infants to their breaſts, ſhrivelled and contracted for want of a proper ſupply of milk. The fathers either poiſoned themſelves, or hanged themſelves on thoſe very trees on which they had juſt ſeen their wives and their children expire. The whole race became extinct." In another place, ſpeaking of the ſlaves of the Europeans in general, he obſerves, " That ſuch hard labour is required of negroe women, both before and after their pregnancy, that their children are either abortive, or live but a ſhort time after delivery; mothers, rendered deſperate by the puniſhments which the weakneſs of their condition occaſions them, ſnatch ſometimes their children from the cradle, in order to ſtrangle them in their arms, and ſacrifice them with a fury mingled with a ſpirit of revenge and compaſſion, that they may not become the property of their cruel maſters."

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many miles home, ſend their women to bring it to their habitation; a taſk which their own lazineſs and pride equally forbid. Among many of the tribes of wandering Arabs, the women are not only obliged to do every domeſtic and every rural work; but alſo, to take care of the horſes, which they are obliged to feed, to dreſs, to bridle and ſaddle, for the uſe of their huſbands. The Mooriſh women, beſides being obliged to do all the ſame kinds of drudgery, have alſo ſome few fields to cultivate; the whole of that labour likewiſe falls upon them, while their huſbands ſtand idle ſpectators of the toil, or ſleep inglorious beneath a neighbouring ſhade. In few ſavage countries are women admitted to the honour of eating and drinking with the men; but are obliged to ſtand and wait upon them while at meals, to ſerve them with whatever they call for, and, after all, to ſit down themſelves and eat up the refuſe of what they have left; which, unleſs in times of great plenty, is commonly but a penurious repaſt. In Madura, the huſband generally ſpeaks to his wife in the moſt imperious and contemptuous tone; while ſhe, with fear and trembling, approaches him, and pronounces not his name, but with the addition of every dignity and title ſhe can deviſe; while, in return for all this ſubmiſſion, he frequently beats and abuſes her in the moſt barbarous manner. Being aſked the reaſon of ſuch a behaviour, one of them anſwered, "As our wives are ſo much our "inferiors, why ſhould we allow them to eat and drink with "us? If they commit faults, why ſhould they not ſuffer correc-"tion? It is their buſineſs only to bring up our children, pound "our rice, make our oil, and do every other kind of drudgery, "purpoſes to which only their low and inferior natures are "adapted."

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AMONG ſome of the negroes on the coaſt of Guinea, a wife is never allowed to appear before her huſband, nor to receive any thing from his hand, but in a kneeling poſture. In ſome parts of America women are not allowed to be preſent at their temples, or join in their religious aſſemblies; and in the houſes where the chiefs meet to conſult on affairs of ſtate, they are only ſuffered to enter and ſeat themſelves on the floor, on each ſide of the paſſage. In Hindoſtan they are not allowed to give evidence in any court; and ſo difficult is it to ſhake off the cuſtoms of barbarity, that this privilege was but lately granted them in Scotland. Some of the Caribs, who are remarkable for the ſlavery of their women, being aſked, why they held them in ſubjection? "We ſubject "our women," ſaid they, "becauſe they are weaker than us, "while in Europe a whole nation of you ſubmit to one man, "who is perhaps not ſo ſtrong as any of you; and even ſome-"times, we are told, to one woman, a thing of which we have "no idea." In the kingdom of Potany, ſo low is the condition of women, that numbers of female ſlaves are kept by the great, not to ſatisfy the appetite of their maſter, nor to do his neceſſary buſineſs, but to be hired out to ſtrangers for the purpoſes of proſtitution. Moſt of our readers, we preſume, are not ignorant of the Circaſſian cuſtom of breeding young girls on purpoſe to be ſold in the public market to the higheſt bidder. But we decline the ſubject, afraid that if the matter be ſcrupulouſly examined into, it will be found, that women are in ſome degree bought and ſold in every county whether ſavage or civilized.

To all theſe indignities offered to the ſex, we may add the general cuſtom in many ſavage countries, of preſenting their wives and young women indiſcriminately to ſtrangers for hire;

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of making them dance naked before them; and of divorcing, and even in ſome places of Tartary *, of deſtroying their wives almoſt at pleaſure. Such, in general, is the picture of ſavage life; more particular figures might eaſily be added to the group of which it is compoſed, but we are afraid that it is already ſufficiently diſguſting to our fair readers, and would not willingly make it more ſo. Women ſo oppreſſed with ſlavery, and irritated by ill uſage, can have no affection for their huſbands, and but little for their children; and when an opportunity of ſhaking off the yoke is offered, it is no wonder that they betray the one, and leave to fortune, or trample upon, the other. This was verified in the women of South America. When the Spaniards firſt arrived in theſe regions, the ſex ſoon diſcovered that they treated them in a very different manner from that of the natives, and while the unfortunate remains of the men were endeavouring to ſeparate themſelves from the ſword that purſued them, by immenſe deſerts and almoſt impenetrable foreſts; the women ran in crowds over the bodies of their murdered huſbands and children, to enjoy a conſequence and kindneſs in the arms of the Spaniards, which ſo much the more delighted them, as they had never been accuſtomed to it. To the attachment of theſe women we may, in a great meaſure, aſcribe the conqueſt of the New World; they uſually ſerved the Spaniards as guides, fre-

* Of this Dr. Cook relates a recent example, "Some young men belonging to my "hoſpital," ſays he, "returning home one evening, and having been overtaken with liquor, "as they paſſed by the Kalmuck tents they went in and gave a woman liquor to intoxicate "her; the huſband not being preſent gave them opportunities of uſing what liberties they "pleaſed; in ſhort, it was ſaid ſhe was caught by her huſband in the very act. He diſmiſſed "her gueſts without quarrelling with them, put his wife to death, and, next morning, I, "with others, ſaw him dragging the dead body towards a bridge, from the middle of which "he threw it into the river."

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quently procured them ſubſiſtence, and ſometimes betrayed the conſpiracies formed againſt them.

Some inſtances of better uſage.

ALTHOUGH ſuch in general is the behaviour of ſavages toward their women, yet, like all other human actions, that behaviour is not ſo uniformly of a piece, as not to admit, now and then, of being chequered with ſomething which has more the appearance of ſoftneſs and of humanity. This inconſiſtency of behaviour, more or leſs, takes place in all nations, and is an inconteſtible proof that manners and cuſtoms are every where more the offspring of chance, than of ſyſtematic arrangement. Among the Hurons, and Iroquois, though women are in every other reſpect treated as ſlaves, ſuch is the power of matrons over their own families, that they can prevail upon them to go to war, or deſiſt from it, as they pleaſe; and, if a matron even wiſhes to engage in a war party, any one who is not connected with her, either with a view to appeaſe the ghoſts of any of her ſlain relations, or to procure priſoners to ſupply their places, ſhe has only to make him a preſent of a collar, or a necklace of ſhells, which operates as the mandate of a fair lady did in the times of chivalry, and ſeldom fails of engaging the champion to take up the hatchet in her favour.

WHEN the Iroquois return from war, if they have taken any priſoners, they conſtantly ſet apart ſome of them for the uſe of the public, and theſe the council of the nation diſpoſe of as they think proper. But ſuch, in this particular, is the power of the mothers of families, that they may, if they pleaſe, invalidate this determination of the council, and diſpoſe of the priſoners otherwiſe, or become ſole arbitreſſes of the life or death of ſuch

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as have been abſolved or condemned by it. We have already obſerved that the dignity of a chief among ſavages, depending upon perſonal proweſs, is commonly elective. Among the Hurons it is, however, not only hereditary, but deſcends in the female line, ſo that it is not the ſon of the chief, but his ſiſter's ſon who ſucceeds him; and if this whole line be extinct, then the ſole power of chuſing another chief is veſted in the nobleſt matron. Every Huron chief is aſſiſted by a council, and one of this council muſt be choſen out of every diſtinguiſhed family; this choice too is the prerogative of the women, and they may, and even ſometimes do, appoint one of their own ſex. It is farther related by ſome authors, that every thing among this people is tranſacted in the name of the women; but thoſe who have had the beſt opportunities of being acquainted with their politics aſſure us, that this authority is no more than nominal, and that the men acquaint the women only with ſuch affairs as they think proper, and make uſe of their names as in other countries one does the ſeal of an office.

Privileges among the Natches.

AMONG the Natches the ſupreme authority is alſo hereditary, and deſcends not only in the female line, but ſeems to devolve equally on a male and female of that line; the male is called the man chief, and the female the woman chief. The woman chief is not the wife, but the ſiſter, or other neareſt female relation of the man chief. She is attended by as numerous a retinue, and has the ſame authority, deference, and reſpect, as the man chief; but theſe are not all, ſhe has, beſides, the moſt ſingular female privilege that hiſtory gives any account of: when ſhe dies, not only her huſband, but even all her retinue, are obliged to follow her into the other world, that ſhe may there be ſerved and attended

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attended upon by them, in the ſame manner as in this. We ſhall have occaſion to mention afterward, that in the Eaſt it has been a cuſtom time immemorial, for wives to burn themſelves on the funeral pile of their deceaſed huſbands, and for the ſlaves, and even horſes of the great, to be buried with them, in order to ſerve them in the other world; but this is the only inſtance we find of a huſband being obliged to ſacrifice himſelf to the manes of his wife; and even this inſtance will not ſo much excite our amazement, when we conſider that the Natches worſhip the ſun, and that the woman chief is by them held as a deſcendant of that luminary; while the man to whom ſhe is married is but a common, and generally an inferior mortal, that ſhe may the more eaſily govern and enſlave him in life, as well as at death, and in the world to come. Something ſimilar to this is practiſed by the Africans about Zaara, where birth and rank impart to ſome women a right of chuſing a huſband, whom they keep in extreme ſubjection, and even condemn to the moſt abject ſlavery, when diſſatisfied with his conduct or condeſcenſion. The ſiſters of the Grand Seignior are alſo generally married to the officers of that tyrant, whom they govern with the moſt abſolute ſway. From this honour and deference paid to the woman chief among the Natches, we would naturally imagine that the condition of their women ſhould be in general preferable to what it is among other ſavages; and we meet with a few anecdotes in their hiſtory, which ſeem to hint that ſome other females, beſides the great woman chief, have particular privileges and honours conferred on them; but however this be, it is certain that the ſex are in general condemned to the ſame ſlavery as in other parts of America.

AMONG

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Perſonal liberty enjoyed by all ſavages.

AMONG the few female privileges which glimmer through the horrid ſcene of ſavage life, that of perſonal liberty is undoubtedly the greateſt; the love of ſavages is ſeldom directed ſo much to any individual as to the ſex in general; hence they have little jealouſy, at leaſt not enough to prompt them to confine their women: but, though in many ſavage countries they are ſo far from being jealous of, that they will even offer their wives to ſtrangers; in others, they ſeem tenacious of the rights of the huſband, and afraid of every ſtrange invader. Captain Wallis, in his paſſage through the ſtreights of Magellan, having ſent out a boat to go on ſhore, ſome of the natives who were on board his ſhip leaped into their canoes and paddled after her, ſhouting and making a great noiſe; the people in the ſhip could not underſtand the meaning of this, thoſe in the boat were as much at a loſs, till they approached the ſhore, when they diſcovered ſome women gathering muſcles among the rocks, who, on hearing the alarm from their countrymen, ran away as faſt they could ſcour. No people ſeem more rude and barbarous than the inhabitants of this coaſt, and yet, from this fear, it ſeems they are not entirely ſtrangers to jealouſy; a paſſion, which, though far from being the general characteriſtic of ſavages, is yet in ſeveral other places to be found among them. But then, it is commonly the paroxyſm of an hour which rages violently and again ſubſides, till a new occaſion call it forth, and not that ſettled and cautious ſuſpicion of warmer regions, and half civilized people, to whom,

——— trifles light as air,
Are confirmations ſtrong, and proofs as holy writ.

Savage women have little property.

THAT women ſhould have much property, among a people who hardly poſſeſs any thing but the proviſions of the preſent

hour, and the empty walls of a miſerable hut, is not to be expected; of what little there is, they have, however, commonly a ſhare; but the clothes, arms, and utenſils belonging to ſavages, being often buried along with them, and the land, for the moſt part, the property of the community, there is ſeldom any thing to inherit that is worth tranſmitting from one generation to another. Dignity is hereditary only among the Hurons and Natches; in almoſt every other barbarous country it is but imperfectly known. Authority is derived ſolely from perſonal ſtrength and courage, and hardly attended with any badges of diſtinction. In polite countries, women ſhare in ſome degree the authority, and generally the honour of their huſbands; in ſavage life they ſhare in neither. It is, however, of ſome little advantage to be married to a war chief, and in ſome places to be the mother of a numerous family, who can provide for, or defend them when neceſſary. The privilege of precedency, which in Europe has the power of faſcinating almoſt every female mind, does not diſturb the peace of ſavages, nor kindles up a ſpark of envy in their breaſts. What we formerly obſerved of the women of the ancient Germans, Celtes, and Gauls, may be equally applied to the ſavage women of the preſent times; they are commonly their only phyſicians and ſurgeons, and, in ſome caſes, are poſſeſſed of ſecrets, by which they have cured diſeaſes that have baffled the ſkill of expert European phyſicians. This ſometimes procures them a little more regard, and gives them a greater conſequence than they would otherwiſe enjoy, but they derive ſtill a greater degree of conſequence from a ſuperſtitious ſource; many of them are ſuppoſed to be endowed with a ſupernatural, or magical power of curing diſeaſes, and making diſcoveries in futurity; ignorance often applies to theſe, to recover what it has loſt, or to procure

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what it deſires; and, however they may be treated at other times, they are ſure, on theſe occaſions, to have the liberty of doing and directing as they pleaſe.

FROM theſe rude ſcenes of uncultivated nature, where the ills that attend on female life are ſo numerous, and its privileges ſo few; let us now turn our eyes towards ſuch people as, in their progreſſive ſtate, have ſhook off the rudeneſs of the moſt ſavage barbarity, and are beginning to advance to a ſocial and civil condition.

Condition of women among people advancing from rudeneſs to civilization.

THE firſt ſtep which a people ſunk in brutality of manners commonly make towards cultivation, is by beginning to beſtow ſome attention on the future, as well as on the preſent hour, and to provide againſt thoſe times of ſcarcity, whoſe ſeverity their own neglect and inattention has brought upon them ſo often, and with ſuch accumulated miſery; this, a little conſideration eaſily points out to them to be moſt readily accompliſhed, by turning from the predatory to the paſtoral ſtate; and ſo having conſtantly in their poſſeſſion a ſtock of tame animals, any of which they can take and uſe at ſuch times and ſeaſons when they cannot find a ſupply of proviſions in the rivers and foreſts around them. In this ſtate are the greateſt part of the wandering hordes of Tartars and Arabs, who, by paſturage alone, procure to themſelves no uncomfortable ſubſiſtence. As this is but one ſtep in the progreſs from ſavage to civil life, the progreſs of female improvement has among them advanced but one ſtep alſo; the paſſion for dreſs, a paſſion ſo natural to the ſex, wherever they meet with the leaſt kind indulgence, begins to ſhew itſelf; while among the rudeſt ſavages, it is repreſſed by unkindneſs,

and

and often obliterated by oppreſſion. Women only dreſs to give an additional luſtre to their charms, and only wiſh to be charming to pleaſe the men; but, where the love of the men is directed more to the ſex than the individual, a woman has no motive to excite even a wiſh of being ſuperiorly beautiful. On the contrary, where love is directed more to the individual than to the ſex, where the men diſtinguiſh by a peculiar attention and regard her, who has the art, by ornament and dreſs, to appear more charming than her companions, who are not leſs beholden to nature; there, the moſt powerful motive to appear beautiful is held out. The paſſion for ornament among the Tartars and Arabs proceeds from this ſource: the men are fond of ſeeing their wives loaded with finery, and will undergo any hardſhip, or part almoſt with any thing but their horſes, to procure it for them.

THERE are a variety of places in Africa, and even ſome in Aſia, where, although the inhabitants have arrived at the paſtoral ſtate, they appear but a little removed from the barbarity of the mere fiſher and hunter; but, where they have carried the ideas of aſſociation and civilization ſo far, as to apply themſelves to agriculture, they are in general ſomewhat more humane, and the effects of that humanity ſhew themſelves, in ſome parts of their behaviour, to the fair ſex; we are not, however, to imagine that this rule is general, but, like all others, liable to many exceptions.

ON ſome parts of the coaſt of Guinea, the women are even ſo far diſtinguiſhed as to have a vote in their public aſſemblies; while in many others, their condition is wretched beyond our imagination. On the banks of the Niger, the women are generally handſome, if beauty can conſiſt in ſymmetry of features,

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and not in colour; they are modeſt, affable, and faithful, and an air of innocence appears in their looks and in their language, which is inexpreſſibly ſoft; their men, not inſenſible of theſe perfections, treat them with a friendſhip, and a ſoftneſs of love beyond the reach of the frigid ideas of a northern. When we approach more towards the Eaſt, the complexion and character of the Africans become worſe. Situated in an ungrateful ſoil, hardly improvable by culture, they are obliged to ſubſiſt moſtly upon the produce of their bow and of their hook; their women have not the amiable modeſty, nor engaging beauty of thoſe on the banks of the Niger; their language, like the ſoil they inhabit, is harſh and diſagreeable; and they are to the men objects of but little love, and have almoſt no political conſequence.

In the iſland of Formoſa, and among ſome tribes of the Peruvians, daughters are more regarded than ſons, becauſe, as ſoon as a woman is married, contrary to the cuſtom of other countries, ſhe brings her huſband home with her to her father's houſe, and he becomes one of the family; ſo that parents derive ſupport and family-ſtrength from the marriage of a daughter; whereas ſons, on their marriage, leave the family for ever. Beſides the inhabitants of the banks of the Niger, there are ſeveral other people in Africa who do not treat their women with that rudeneſs and barbarity, which we ſhould naturally expect from a people ſo little cultivated. In particular there is one tribe diſtinguiſhed by the name of Pholeys, whoſe conſtant maxim is, if poſſible, to live in peace; who are no indifferent proficients in ſome of the arts of civil life; and, perhaps, ſecond to no people on earth in benevolence and humanity: their women have all the advantages of ſociety, and all the indulgence of friendſhip and of love.

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THOUGH paſturage, agriculture, and every thing that brings mankind into ſociety, is generally in favour of women; yet the firſt efforts of a people in agriculture commonly lay an additional load of labour on the ſhoulders of that ſex; ſo that they loſe, at firſt, by an inſtitution, which afterwards turns greatly to their advantage. This is the caſe in many parts of Aſia and Africa; imperfectly acquainted with the cultivation of the ground, it yields them but an indifferent increaſe; to cultivate it is, therefore, conſidered as an employment not worthy of the time of men, but only fit for women, who cannot in any other thing employ themſelves to greater advantage. Hence, to all the labours to which they had formerly been accuſtomed, is added thoſe of digging the ground, ſowing the ſeed, and reaping the harveſt; toils which, in a ſultry climate, muſt be exceedingly diſagreeable to the delicate conſtitutions of a ſex, which nature ſeems to have formed for ſofter purpoſes. But we have already had occaſion to enumerate too many of the evils to which that ſex are ſubjected; we ſhall therefore now rather trace their improvement towards that ſtate in which we find them in poliſhed ſociety, than backwards to that ſavage one, over which, for the ſake of humanity, we would wiſh to throw a veil.

Of the confinement of women.

THOUGH politeneſs teaches us to conſider the confinement of women as an unlawful exertion of ſuperior power, and to ſhudder at it as an unmerited ſeverity; yet we find it practiſed almoſt all over Aſia, Africa, and even in ſome parts of Europe: but what ſeems rather extraordinary, is, that wherever it takes place, it affords a demonſtrative proof of the inhabitants being arrived ſome degrees farther in civilization than mere ſavages, who have hardly any love, and, conſequently, as little jealouſy; who, not regarding

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their women ſo much as to be ſolicitous about their good behaviour, give the looſe to their freedom, and are unconcerned about their conduct.

THIS confinement of the ſex, which we ſhall have occaſion to diſcuſs more fully afterward, does not appear to be extremely rigid in the empire of the Mogul; it is, perhaps, leſs ſo in China, and in Japan hardly exiſts. In the dominions of the Grand Signior, women are more ſtrictly guarded; and in Perſia have, time immemorial, hardly enjoyed the leaſt degree of liberty; ſo powerful is the rage of jealouſy, and ſo rooted the opinion of female frailty. But though women are confined in the Turkiſh empire, they experience every other indulgence; they are allowed, at ſtated times, to go to the public baths; their apartments are richly, if not elegantly furniſhed; they have a train of female ſlaves to ſerve and amuſe them; and their perſons are adorned with every coſtly ornament, which their fathers or huſbands can afford: in ſhort, their ſituation, upon the whole, ſeems ſo eligible, that lady Montague ſcruples not to affirm, that they are the only free and happy women on the globe; though we rather ſuſpect, that her ladyſhip would not have changed her Engliſh freedom for all the finery and gloom of the firſt Haram, or even of the ſeraglio of Conſtantinople. Notwithſtanding the ſtrictneſs of confinement in Perſia, their women are treated with ſeveral indulgences; perhaps to divert their attention from brooding on the wretchedneſs of their ſituation, they are loaded with the fineſt ſilks, and ornamented with the jewels of the Eaſt; but all theſe trappings, however elegant, or however gilded, are only like the golden chains ſometimes made uſe of to bind a royal priſoner.

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THE Mahomedan women, in the empire of the Mogul, are rather of more conſequence than either in Turkey or in Perſia. Among the lower and middling ranks, they are not ſtrictly confined; and in the ſeraglio, they ſometimes acquire no ſmall influence over the deſpot, at whoſe frown ſo extenſive an empire trembles. Noor-Jehan, whom we formerly mentioned by the name of Mher-ul-Niſſa, having become the favourite wife of the emperor Jehangire, ſoon afterward placed her own relations in almoſt all the principal employments of the empire, introduced ſuch luxury and magnificence, that to uſe the words of an oriental writer, "expenſive pageants, and ſumptuous entertainments, "became the whole buſineſs of the court; the voice of muſic never "ceaſed by day in the ſtreet, and the ſky was enlightened at night "with fireworks and illuminations; her name was joined with "that of the emperor on the current coin; ſhe was the ſpring "which moved the machine of the ſtate; her family took "rank immediately after the princes of the blood, and were ad-"mitted even to the moſt ſecret apartments of the ſeraglio." Such, however, was only the influence of ſuperior beauty, and ſuperior ſenſe: it was not common for women to govern in this manner; though they frequently moved in degrees of inferior conſequence. The ſeraglios of people of rank are guarded with a ſtricter ſeverity than thoſe of the lower order; ſuch people, every where, have a mixture of pride and jealouſy, which far ſurpaſſes the ſimple feelings of the clown: beſides the diſagreeableneſs of perfidy in his women, the grandee adds to it, the ſtain which his honour would ſuffer, ſhould any of them be corrupted by one of inferior quality; and even the women themſelves are ſaid to glory in their confinement, as it conceals them from vulgar eyes; and there have been inſtances, where they rather choſe to be burned

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to death, when their apartments had accidentally taken fire, than ſubmit to the indelicacy of being expoſed to public view.

Power of huſbands in the Haram.

WHERE ſo great a number of wives and concubines are allowed, an almoſt unlimited power is neceſſary to reſtrain them from the utmoſt diſorder and confuſion. This power is the ſame deſpotiſm in miniature, which prevails in the ſtate; and has the ſame effect upon the paſſions, reducing them all under the dominion of fear. Even female jealouſy, which, in other countries, tranſports the ſoul into the regions of fury and diſpair, is curbed within the walls of a Haram; the women may there repine in ſecret, but they muſt clothe their features with cheerfulneſs when their lord appears; contumacy only draws down on them immediate puniſhment; they are degraded, chaſtiſed, divorced; and even put to death, according to the degree of their crime, or the indignation they have excited: their friends may murmur in ſecret at their fate; but there is no redreſs in the laws of their country, nor does public juſtice take any cognizance of the affairs of the Haram: Though the laws of Hindoſtan ſuffer women thus to be abuſed, yet ſo ſacred are their perſons, that they muſt not in the leaſt be violated, nor even looked at by any one but their huſbands. This female privilege has given an opportunity of executing many conſpiracies; warriors, in ſuch carriages as are uſually employed to convey women, have been often conveyed, without examination, into the apartments of the great; from whence, inſtead of iſſuing forth in the ſmiles of beauty, they have ruſhed out in the terror of arms, and laid the tyrant at their feet.

Tenacious of the chaſtity of their wives.

THE concealment of their women is a ſacred tenet among the Mahomedans of Hindoſtan; even brothers cannot viſit their ſiſters

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ſiſters in private; and ſtrangers muſt, upon no account, ſee them; for another to be conſcious of the exiſtence of a man's wives ſeems even a crime; and he looks ſurly and offended if their health is enquired after: in every country, honour conſiſts in that which a man is moſt ſolicitous to ſecure; this, in Hindoſtan, is the chaſtity of his wives; a point, without which, the Aſiatic muſt not live. This opinion the deſpot always encourages; as the poſſeſſion of the women of his moſt powerful ſubjects, is the beſt pledge of their fidelity, when without the reach of his immediate chaſtiſement: when the governor of a province falls under the ſuſpicion of his prince, the firſt ſtep taken againſt him, is, an order that he ſhall ſend his women to court: if he ſends but one, though far from being his greateſt favourite, ſhe is conſidered as the moſt inviolable ſecurity for his good behaviour: if he heſitates, or promiſes obedience at ſome future period, when it ſhall be more convenient, he is immediately declared a rebel; his affection for the woman whom he ſent as a hoſtage, is not conſidered as the tie which binds him to fidelity, but his honour is placed in her perſon; and that honour, in caſe of diſloyalty, would be in the power of his ſovereign to violate. So ſacred are women in India, that, even in the midſt of ſlaughter and devaſtation, the common ſoldier leaves them unmoleſted; the Haram is a ſanctuary againſt all the licentiouſneſs of victory; and ruffians, covered with the blood of a huſband, ſhrink back with veneration from the ſecret apartment of his wives. Whether this depends upon cuſtom, or on religion, is uncertain; but it is not altogether confined to India. At Conſtantinople, when the Sultan ſends an order to ſtrangle a ſtate-criminal, and to ſeize on his effects; the ruffians, who execute it, enter not into the Haram, nor touch any thing belonging to the women.

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Women ill-treated in ſpite of this ſacredneſs of perſon.

But in ſpite of all this ſeeming veneration, this ſacredneſs of perſon, the women of Aſia are, in general, only a kind of cyphers, held up to be the ſport of fortune; ſubjected, not only to the nod of a tyrant lord, but alſo to his eunuchs, ſtill more mercileſs and tyrannical. Educated in a manner which tends only to debaſe their minds, by obliterating their virtues; torn with jealouſy and chagrin, even their pleaſures are joyleſs; and in a very few years, their period of youth and beauty being over, that of neglect, which is long and unſupportable, commences. Solomon had threeſcore queens, and fourſcore concubines; but a petty Hindoo chief has been known to have two thouſand women confined within the walls of his Haram; and appropriated to his pleaſure only. Strange that the rights of humanity and of population ſhould be ſo publicly violated! but they are not violated by the Aſiatics alone; the Europeans, caught with the contagion, have imitated their example. The Portugueze, after their firſt ſettlement in India, became ſo debauched, that many of hem had ſeven or eight concubines; which they did not confine like the natives, but obliged them to labour, and forced from them the money they had earned; nor have other Europeans refrained from debaucheries, which diſgraced their religion and their humanity.

The whole of the ancient inhabitants of Hindoſtan, diſtinguiſhed by the name of Hindoos, are divided into claſſes, or caſts, every one of which riſes gradually in rank and dignity above another; and every one of which moſt rigidly keeps within itſelf, nor ever mixes, either by marriage or any kind of connection, with thoſe beneath it: hence women have not, as in other

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other countries, an opportunity of advancing themſelves by marriage; being obliged to marry into the caſt to which they belong: the Hindoo women are not, however, guarded with that ſtrictneſs and ſeverity, which is exerciſed over the Mahomedans. In ſome places, even thoſe of conſiderable rank appear publicly in the ſtreet. In Ethiopia, the women are of more conſequence than among the Mahomedans, or Hindoos of Aſia. Poncet tells us, that the ſiſter of the reigning emperor, while he was there, had a palace of her own, appeared frequently in public, mounted on a mule richly capariſoned, and ſurrounded by four or five hundred women, ſounding tabors and ſinging verſes in her praiſe. In China, which, for politeneſs of manners, is little inferior to any part of Europe, women ſeem to enjoy the ſame rank, and to ſhare in the honours and dignities of their huſbands. The emperor may raiſe to the dignity of empreſs, any one of his women whom he pleaſes; and we are informed by Duhalde, that on an occaſion of this nature, "after all the great officers and mandarins "had paid their compliments to the emperor, the princeſſes of the "blood, and all the ladies of the firſt quality, with the wives of "the great mandarins, went to the palace; into which being "introduced, according to their rank, by a miſtreſs of the cere-"monies, the firſt eunuch preſented himſelf, whom the miſtreſs "of the ceremonies thus addreſſed: I humbly beſeech the em-"preſs, in behalf of this aſſembly, to vouchſafe her preſence, and "place herſelf on the throne; which ſhe having done, all the "ladies made two curtſies, fell on their knees, and ſtruck their "foreheads againſt the ground; then ſtood up, in the ſame order, "in the profoundeſt ſilence, while the empreſs deſcended from the "throne and withdrew." Though honours of ſuch a nature are paid to a Chineſe empreſs, and to every woman according to her

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rank, yet the fair ſex are hardly entruſted with any property, and have no fortunes. Circumſtances which, though at firſt view we may conſider as an affront and indignity, are, notwithſtanding, among the Chineſe, ſymptoms of love and regard. That wiſe people, ſolicitous of their own happineſs, and of that of the ſex, endeavour, by this means, to prevent a woman from being choſen as a wife, on the ſordid motives of intereſt and avarice. A wife, therefore, being conſtantly choſen from love, and having no ſeparate intereſt from that of her huſband, nor any independence to render her undutiful and impertinent, the chain of matrimony, which in many other countries is made of iron, is, in China, only a ſilken cord. In Japan, the women of the Deyario, or great hereditary emperor and high prieſt, ſeem to be venerated and honoured in a degree not much inferior to himſelf. And in Siam, we have an account, by Kempfer, of a funeral of one of their queens; ſo magnificent, as to leave no room to doubt that the women are not conſidered there in a deſpicable light.

Condition of the Aſiatic women, chequered with good and evil.

BEFORE we take our leave of Aſia, it may not be improper to obſerve, that the account here given of the condition of their women; an account ſtrangely chequered with good and evil, but in which the evil, for the moſt part, greatly predominates, may be materially different from the ideas conceived of it by our fair readers, who have formed their opinions from eaſtern tales and romances; which, if not contradicted by facts, would impoſe upon us a belief, that their women were the moſt beautiful, and the moſt happy beings in the creation; becauſe the men conſtantly approach them in the moſt ſubmiſſive manner, while every flowery epithet, for which the eaſtern language is ſo remarkable,

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hangs upon their tongue; and every promiſe they make, is to laſt for life, or for eternity. But the reverſe of the picture ſhews us, that they keep in the crueleſt ſubjection and confinement, the beings they ſeem to adore; and while they appear to humble themſelves at their feet, are actually the jailors who confine, and the tyrants who enſlave them. Even among the Chineſe, whom we may reckon the politeſt of the Aſiatics, wives are ſometimes ſtrangled at the death of their huſbands, that they may go and ſerve them in the other world.

Such as we have deſcribed, is the condition of women, among many of thoſe people who hold a kind of middle rank, between ſavage barbarity and civilization; but as the culture of manners, and of the ſocial principle among mankind, does not always proceed upon an uniform plan, but is varied, according to the genius, to the neceſſities, and to a thouſand other circumſtances, we find one nation often excelling another in one or two points of refinement, while in every other point of the ſame kind, it is greatly behind it. Thus, in Otaheite, an iſland lately diſcovered in the South Sea, the inhabitants, though hitherto unacquainted with any part of the globe, but a few more iſlands ſcattered around them; though ſons of pure nature, and almoſt entirely fed and clothed by her hand; though without the leaſt knowledge of art, or glimmering of ſcience, are, nevertheleſs, ſocial among themſelves, civil and polite to the fair ſex, allowing them every rank and dignity, and even the ſupreme authority of the iſland, when it is their birthright; treating them with a deference and indulgence, which the weakneſs and ſoftneſs of their nature ſeems to require; and yet, though they have carried their politeneſs

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thus far; though the two ſexes conſtantly live together in promiſcuous ſociety; at meals, which bring the people of polite nations together, the ſexes in Otaheite are ſeparated. The women ſometimes ſerve the men at their repaſts; but never eat with them, or in their company; ſo that it is preſumable, the action of eating or drinking is, in this iſland, ranked among the number of female indelicacies: we, who are conſtantly uſed to other manners and cuſtoms, reckon it extraordinary that women ſhould refuſe to eat in the preſence of men; but it is ſtill more extraordinary, that ſome of the chiefs of this people, either from a principle of pride, or for ſome other reaſon that we are not acquainted with, will not deign to put any thing into their own mouths, but, like children, muſt be conſtantly fed by their women. Perhaps the ſame cauſe, which induces the Otaheitean to this ſlabbering dignity, operating in Europe, would induce a man to be ſerved in plate, or to ride in his coach; in the Eaſt, to burn coſtly perfumes, add more beauties to thoſe already languiſhing in his ſeraglio, and more ſlaves to thoſe who attend on his perſon; and, in America, to hang more of the ghaſtly ſpoils of war round his body, and add to the natural ferocity of his viſage, by painting himſelf frightful.

It is ſomewhat remarkable, that over the greateſt part of America, which, at preſent, may be called the native country of ſavage barbariſm, the men have in general but one wife; while in Aſia and Africa, where they are commonly a little more civilized, an unreſtrained polygamy ſhould ſtill take place; and that, while in many other reſpects they treat their women better, this cuſtom, which gives them their rivals for their inſeparable companions, ſhould not have been aboliſhed. But ſo permanent and

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unalterable are the cuſtoms of the Eaſt, and particularly this of a plurality of wives, that, in all probability, it will be among the laſt of the chains of female ſlavery that will be broken; and if we can believe many of the miſſionaries, who were ſent to propagate Chriſtianity among them, there were none of the precepts of that religion, which they found ſo much difficulty of making them conform to, as that of confining themſelves to one wife; a thing which they thought ſo abſurd and unreaſonable, that they could not believe it to be agreeable to the will of the great Lord of the univerſe.

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The ſame Subject continued.

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IN theſe imperfect ſketches, which we have already given of the rank and condition of ancient and modern women, we are ſorry to ſay, that it was long before we found them getting into poſſeſſion of the common rights of mankind; that at preſent, in more than one quarter of the globe, they are the moſt abject ſlaves; and in much more than another, perpetual priſoners: while in that little corner of it, called Europe, they only poſſeſs the conſequence to which they ſeem entitled by nature, in the ſcale of intelligent beings. It is, therefore, with pleaſure we now arrive at that part of our hiſtory, which leads us to conſider their condition in poliſhed and civil ſociety; which, in other words, is conſidering it only in Europe; after having ſeen it in a light, which does ſo little honour to our ſex, and adds ſo much wretchedneſs to theirs, in every other part of the globe.

Treatment of women in Europe.

BUT though the fair ſex are, in Europe, commonly treated with an affection and indulgence, which in other parts they are either quite ſtrangers to, or only enjoy on particular occaſions; yet, as all Europe is not equally cultivated in manners, the condition of women is not in every part of it equally eligible.

RUSSIA,

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Diſadvantages of the Ruſſian women.

RUSSIA, which we conſider as an European nation, though comprehending in its dominions a part of Aſia, has only begun a few years ago to aſſume the poliſh of the Europeans; and is as yet far from having attained that ſoftneſs of behaviour, which muſt diſtinguiſh every people before they can treat, with propriety, a ſex, whoſe acute feelings, both of body and of mind, demand lenity and indulgence. The condition of women in Ruſſia is, therefore, much leſs deſirable than it is in England, France, or Italy. A late empreſs of Ruſſia, as a puniſhment for ſome female frailties, ordered a moſt beautiful young lady of family to be publicly knouted, in a manner which was hardly leſs indelicate than ſevere. The ſame empreſs, at another time, allowed ſeveral ladies of the firſt quality to ſuffer the puniſhment of the knout publicly, and afterwards to have their tongues cut out: while theſe cruel ſentences were executing, they were expoſed on the backs of men, with no covering, but a ſcanty petticoat. Such were the Ruſſians only a few years ago; when in every other part of Europe, and even among people whom we call barbarians, the law, when neceſſarily obliged to inflict puniſhment on female delinquents, never violated the rules of decency. It has been aſſerted by many travellers, that a Ruſſian bride, on her wedding-night, preſented the bridegroom with a whip of her own making, in token of her ſubjection; and thought herſelf much ſlighted, if he did not immediately make a trial of it upon her perſon. Later travellers, however, aſſure us, that if ever ſuch a cuſtom did exiſt, they could find no remaining traces of it at preſent.

THOUGH the women at Peterſburgh are not confined to their apartments, they go little abroad, being but juſt emerging from a ſtate

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a ſtate of barbarity. In their converſation, and their actions, there is hardly any thing of that ſoftneſs and delicacy which diſtinguiſhes the ſex in other parts of Europe; even their exerciſes and diverſions have more of the maſculine than the feminine. The preſent empreſs, with the ladies of her court, ſometimes divert themſelves by ſhooting at a mark. Drunkenneſs, the vice of almoſt every cold climate, they are ſo little aſhamed of, that not many years ago, a lady would have returned to the houſe of her friend the next day, to thank her for doing her the pleaſure of making her drunk the day before; nor is it long ſince the regulations for the aſſemblies, at the court of Peterſburgh, contained this remarkable article; an article which, perhaps, is ſtill extant: "And it is farther ordered, that ladies ſhall not get "drunk upon any pretence whatever, nor gentlemen before "nine o'clock."

Their advantages.

HOWEVER unfavourable this account of the Ruſſian women may appear, their condition is far from being ſo deſpicable, as we might from thence naturally imagine. They ſhare the rank and ſplendour of the families of which they are ſprung, and of the huſbands with whom they marry; and even the ſupreme authority; which at preſent is enjoyed by an empreſs, whoſe head does honour to her nation and to her ſex; although on ſome occaſions the virtues of her heart have been much ſuſpected. In the military, the widows and daughters, as well as ſons of officers, are provided for by government; the widows, if young, are allowed one year's pay, according to the rank of their huſbands, by way of a portion; if old, they have a fourth of the pay of their huſbands during life, and their daughters have the ſame till the age of fifteen; when they are ſuppoſed to be fit to marry, or otherwiſe to provide

provide for themſelves. In civil life, the ſex are protected from inſult by ſeveral ſalutary laws, and, except among the peaſants, are exempted from every kind of toil and ſlavery, enjoy ſuch portions as are given them, or fall to their ſhare by heritage; and, upon the whole, ſeem approaching faſt to the enjoyment of that conſequence to which they have already arrived in ſeveral parts of Europe.

Their condition in ſome others of the northern countries.

In the other northern countries of Europe, the ſtate of women is, in many reſpects, but mean and contemptible. In Lapland, Norway, and Poland, they have hardly even ſeparate apartments, except in ſome houſes of their firſt nobility. Eſtates, as well thoſe that are acquired, as thoſe that are hereditary, deſcend to the children in the following proportions: in Poland, a ſon has always two ſhares, and a daughter one; nor can a father diſpoſe of his fortune otherwiſe, without a judicial ſentence to enable him ſo to do. In Denmark, women may ſucceed as heirs to any inheritance, but no female, of whatever rank or condition, can ſell, diſpoſe of, or in any other manner alienate any land, but muſt leave it to the heir at law, who on her demiſe is empowered to take poſſeſſion of it; notwithſtanding any deviſe, bargain, or ſale that ſhe may have made in her lifetime to the contrary. In Britain, daughters are excluded from inheriting hereditary eſtates ſo long as there are any ſons alive; but ſuch eſtates as the fathers have acquired, they may give to their daughters, or leave to them by will, though they have ſons at the ſame time living. In Piedmont, females cannot inherit a fief as long as any of the male line are alive. Though the Britiſh ladies ſeldom enjoy titles or honours in their own right, yet they conſtantly ſhare in thoſe of their huſbands, wives of biſhops and judges only excepted;

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and further, a man of the higheſt quality, by marrying a woman from the very loweſt of the people, confers upon her the ſame rank and quality as he enjoys himſelf; whereas no man, however mean, can again altogether reduce her to her original ſtate; the title ſhe had once acquired by her noble huſband ſhe retains, by the complaiſance of her acquaintance, till death, though ſhe ſhould again be married to the meaneſt plebeian. Engliſh women have never had any power conferred on them to ennoble their huſbands, but of late it has not been uncommon to beſtow titles and honours on women, in their own right, with a power of tranſmitting them to their male poſterity. In Germany, female honours run in a channel ſomething different from that of Britain, they are only the property of birth, or attainable by marriage, and on the deceaſe of a huſband the wife, if ſhe was his inferior, deſcends to that rank in life which ſhe occupied before marriage. Some writers on the Germanic conſtitution have alleged that this is a political inſtitution to encourage matrimony among the great; but, as women are ſeldom averſe to this ſtate, to place the loſs of being unmarried on their ſide, is putting the weight into the wrong ſcale.

Property, how far veſted in women.

As being veſted with the management and diſpoſal of property, whether in goods or eſtates of inheritance, is a privilege from which women, in moſt ages and countries, have either been entirely debarred, or enjoyed under a great variety of limitations and reſtrictions; and as this privilege is one of thoſe which confers the greateſt power and dignity, and upon which mankind ſet the greateſt value, we ſhall endeavour to give our readers ſome idea how far it has been granted or denied to the ſex, whoſe hiſtory we are now conſidering.

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To give portions to women at the time of their marriage was an ancient cuſtom among ſome nations; Pharaoh gave the city of Gazer as a portion to his daughter when ſhe became the wife of Solomon, king of Iſrael; but we have great reaſon to believe that, in ſuch early times, neither the management nor diſpoſal of the portions ſo given were veſted in the perſon of the wife, but that ſhe, and the dowry which came along with her, were almoſt equally conſidered as the property of the huſband. Almoſt the whole hiſtory of remote antiquity preſents us with a ſcene, in which women appear too inconſiderable to have acquired any of the goods of fortune, or to have been truſted with them when acquired by their parents or relations. Among the ancient inhabitants of Chaldea and Arabia, we are told, that women could not hold the poſſeſſion of any inheritance; and the deciſion of this matter by Moſes, ſhews that, in his time, no precedent had exiſted of females having any ſuch privilege. The daughters of Zelophehad brought before Moſes, the prieſts, the princes, and the congregation, a petition, ſetting forth, that their father, after having always demeaned himſelf properly, had died in the wilderneſs, having no ſons; on which account they thought themſelves entitled to a poſſeſſion among the brethren of their father, which Moſes, by the commandment of the Lord, not only granted them, but alſo ordained, that in future, when a man died, having no ſons, his inheritance ſhould become the property of his daughters. A deciſion, which ſeems to be the baſis on which the ſucceſſion of women is, in many countries, founded at this day.

As the Egyptians had the greateſt eſteem and veneration for their women, and even in many things ſubmitted themſelves to their direction, we have great reaſon to believe that they allowed

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them property, and the ſucceſſion to the eſtates of their anceſtors; eſpecially when we conſider that the Greeks, who were originally a colony from Egypt, were, beſides the Hebrews, the only people of antiquity, whom we find indulging them with this privilege. The ancient Romans, trained up to war and to arms, to take by conqueſt the land of their neighbours, and to retain by force what they had thus conquered, had no idea that women ſhould inherit what they could neither conquer nor defend; but fathers, in time, thinking it hard that their ſons ſhould be rich in poſſeſſions, while their daughters had none; and that more diſtant male relations ſhould take the eſtates as heirs at law, contrived to make ſuch proviſions for their daughters, as rendered the eſtates ſo taken of little value. The people, irritated at this proceeding, and convinced from the relics of barbarity ſtill lurking in their minds, that women ought not to have any inheritance, paſſed the Voconian law, by which it was ordained, That no woman ſhould be left heireſs to an eſtate, even though an only child; a law, which continued in force till the Romans became more refined and ſoftened in their ſentiments, when a regard to the weaker ſex broke through the unjuſt reſtraint laid upon them, and granted them a right of ſucceſſion, after the death of brothers, both in moveables and in land.

BARBARITY of manners is almoſt every where productive of the ſame cuſtoms. So little did the Lombards think women qualified to inherit eſtates, that, by their law, even the natural children, diſtant male relations, and the public treaſury, might ſhare the inheritance with daughters. This law was ſoftened among the Saxons, where the father and mother were bound to leave their eſtate to their ſons, and to their daughters if they had

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no ſon. Among the Burgundians, daughters were neither allowed to be heirs in conjunction with ſons, nor to ſucceed to the crown. The Salique lands among the Franks ſeem to have been of a tenure ſimilar to thoſe in the times of the feodal ſyſtem, held under a lord, for which the tenant was to perform military ſervice; women were not admitted as inheritors, or tenants of ſuch lands, for a plain reaſon, becauſe they were not qualified to perform the military ſervice by which they were held; but methods were afterwards diſcovered to elude this prohibition: he who wanted to make his daughter equal to his ſon, carried her before the commiſſary, and ſaid, "My dear child, an ancient and impious "cuſtom bars a young woman from ſucceeding to her father; "but as all my children are equally given me by God, I ought "to love them equally; therefore, my dear child, my will is, "that my effects ſhall be ſhared equally between you and your "brethren." This Salique law, which in modern France ſeems little if at all regarded by the ſubject, is ſtill in force with regard to the crown, no woman ever being allowed to inherit it. But though the French will not ſuffer a woman to ſway their ſcepter, they cannot hinder her from ruling the monarch which holds it; a caſe which has ſo often happened, that, in ſpite of their Salique law, they have been more under the direction of women than any of the neighbouring kingdoms.

THE laws which preclude females from enjoying property and inheritance have, perhaps, in every other country, beſide France, been confined to the ſubject. Among many of the nations of antiquity, among the preſent Aſiatics, and even in ſome parts of America, where women in general have no property, and almoſt no political exiſtence; where it was never heard that they enjoyed

any

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any land, nor were even truſted with the management of their own perſons, they have been allowed, in failure of male iſſue, to mount the throne, and manage the affairs of a ſtate; a practice ſo inconſiſtent with reaſon, that the only cauſe we can aſſign for it is ſuperſtition.

Cauſes why women have no property.

FROM the mean and ſervile condition of the fair ſex in barbarous countries, they ſeem to be rendered incapable of property. Whatever they acquire by their labour, whatever they take in the chace, is entirely under the adminiſtration of the male relations and friends, by whom they are protected, and from whom they receive a ſcanty and precarious ſubſiſtence. Wherever polygamy is countenanced, women cannot poſſibly enjoy much property: property creates independence; and a woman who is independent would not ſubmit to ſo many rivals, and ſo ſcanty a ſhare of the favours of a huſband. Wherever women are ſtrictly confined, they can have no property; any thing further than food and raiment, to them would be unneceſſary; and any thing that could not be brought within the walls of a Haram, they could not manage. Wherever the ſex are publickly bought and ſold, whether as wives or as ſlaves, they can have but little property; they are in ſuch caſes the property transferred themſelves, and conſequently in a ſtate too mean to be truſted with other property, perhaps reckoned more valuable than they are. When we meet with ſo great a variety of cauſes which deprive women of property, when we conſider how widely theſe cauſes are diſſeminated, we ſhall find that it is only in a few of the politer countries of Europe that they are poſſeſſed of this privilege, and even there, with ſuch reſtrictions, that in many caſes they can hardly be ſaid to enjoy what they poſſeſs; but as we ſhall have occaſion afterwards to treat more fully of the rights and privileges of the Britiſh

Britiſh women, which are in a great meaſure ſimilar to thoſe of the other poliſhed countries in the neighbourhood, we ſhall not at preſent anticipate that part of our ſubject.

Love, pageantry, and ſhow, the delight of women.

In thoſe ſtages of human ſociety that intervene between the moſt uncultivated ſtate of nature and a taſte for elegance and refinement of manners, pageantry and ſhow ſeem to employ the utmoſt attention, and to be conſidered as the only proper appendages of grandeur, ſtrong proofs of which are afforded us by almoſt all the nations of the Eaſt, and by Poland in the North; the Poliſh women of faſhion ſeldom go to viſit one another without being attended by the moſt numerous train of ſervants, carriages, and flambeaus they can muſter; but when we follow them home, we meet with nothing adequate to this parade; their apartments are but poorly furniſhed, and but hardly clean, and themſelves are the mean and fawning ſlaves of their huſbands, who, except in the articles of equipage and dreſs, ſcarcely treat them as rational beings. In Germany, where the taſte is in general leſs formed, the women are more fond of family pageantry, and more crammed with family pride than in France or England. In Italy, of a warmer temperament, they aim more at captivating the heart than the eyes, and have there, as well as in France, attained almoſt to an abſolute dominion over the men; a prerogative which in Portugal ſeems much on the decline; for though, in the time of Alphonſo, when the Portugueſe were an honour to human nature, the man who inſulted a woman, or broke any promiſe he had made to her, was degraded from whatever rank he enjoyed; at preſent, the falſe gallantry introduced, authoriſes him to commit every perfidy of that nature with impunity.

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Why treated with indulgence.

In England, France, Italy, and thoſe other parts of Europe which have arrived nearly at the ſame degree of politeneſs; prompted by a mixture of humanity and love, the men have entirely exempted the women from every ſpecies of labour, except what is abſolutely neceſſary among the poor for obtaining their daily bread; and even there, it is with pleaſure we often obſerve the ruſtic clown, while he wipes the ſweat from his brow, endeavouring to lighten the burden and alleviate the taſk of the ſun-burnt daughter of labour who toils by his ſide.

So extenſive are the effects of politeneſs in Europe, that it has not only ſoftened the actions and manners of him who, tutored in the lap of eaſe, has received the poliſh of a good education; but of him alſo who, left to nature, has nothing to boaſt of but what he received from her hand. This ſpirit of ſympathetic indulgence, or of polite gallantry, does not ſtop at endeavouring to eaſe the load of female toil, or to mitigate the ſeverity of that labour for which their natural weakneſs ſeems to have incapacitated the ſex; it expands itſelf to every part of the conduct of the men which has any relation to them. We give to a woman, even though of inferior quality, the right hand, ſhew her every token of reſpect, and place her in every ſituation of honour. We laviſh our ſubſtance upon ornaments for our wives and daughters, and reckon, that when they appear in elegance and taſte, they reflect a luſtre and credit upon us. We are hurt when they behave improperly, and on the contrary, perſuade ourſelves that their good conduct adds a dignity to our character and reputation. In ſhort, we are ſo deeply intereſted in every thing that relates to them, that they may be conſidered as the arbiters of our fate, and the ſpring which ſets in motion, and continues to direct, almoſt every action of our lives;

lives; ſuch is the indulgence we ſhew them, and ſuch the power we put into their hands, that a proverbial ſaying has from thence ariſen, that England is the heaven of women, and the hell of horſes.

In France, Italy, and Spain, the deference paid to women is ſtill greater than in England, and generally proceeds from different motives; here, the honours we confer upon them flow from a mixture of love for their perſons, and eſteem of their virtues; there, it ariſes, for the moſt part, only from a kind of cuſtomary gallantry, which ſeems directed more to the ſex than the individual. A Frenchman, the moment he is in the company of a woman, whether young or old, beautiful or otherwiſe, declares himſelf her admirer, talks of flames and darts, and pays her a thouſand compliments on her beauty. An Italian, when he is introduced to a lady, approaches her in the moſt humble and ſubmiſſive manner, kiſſes her hand, and if ſhe is handſome, and of quality, conſiders her as a ſublime being, an angel in a human form, and conſequently never to be approached but with the greateſt reverence. The Spaniard goes yet a ſtep farther, the whole ſex is to him an object of little leſs than adoration; he retains ſtill a tincture of the ſpirit of knight-errantry in every thing relating to women, and will readily venture his life to ſave any of them from trouble or from danger; the object of his love is never leſs than a goddeſs, whom he always mentions with all the extravagance that metaphor and hyperbola can dictate, and to a woman, above the rank of a peaſant, he never preſents any thing but in a kneeling poſture.

Conſiderations on the treatment of the ſex.

These improvements, in the condition of the fair ſex of Europe, ſeem naturally to point out to us, that they are there the

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the moſt happy, as well as the moſt deſerving of beings; but the external appearance of things is but an unfaithful mirrour, whoſe repreſentation we cannot altogether depend on. Women are in ſome degree every where the ſlaves of ſuperior power; in Aſia, impriſoned, and conſtantly reduced to act by the impulſe of another, without any will or any inclination which they can gratify, their triumphs laſting only a few moments; their rivalry, animoſities, and confinement, till death. In Africa and America, the mere drudges of their proud tyrants, they labour to procure ſubſiſtence for themſelves and huſbands, and when they have done, are treated little better than our dogs; they receive only chaſtiſement and crumbs. In Europe, for the moſt part, but improperly, or ſlightly educated; and at all times kept in a ſtate of dependence, by the reſtrictions of a ſevere legiſlation, which, in the management and diſpoſal of what property is allowed them, commonly cramps the freedom of their will. Diſhonoured and diſgraced beyond all poſſibility of redemption, by the commiſſion of faults, which in the men are hardly conſidered as any thing but acts of gallantry; and even in the ſtate of matrimony, a ſtate to which they naturally aſpire, more indiſſolubly bound than their huſbands. The law affords them no relief, unleſs the cruel partner to whom they are tied, has attempted to take away their life; and while he may riot with impunity in adulterous amours, if the wife retaliates, by copying his example, he immediately procures a divorce, and may turn her out without ſubſiſtence, to the ſcorn and contempt of her own ſex, who, in ſuch caſes, ſeldom look with pity even on a repenting ſinner.

Cauſes of the good and ill treatment of women.

THOUGH we have marked, as we came along, ſeveral of the cauſes of the good and ill-treatment of women, yet we flatter ourſelves

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ourſelves it may not be improper to conclude this chapter with a more accurate view of them. Were we on this ſubject to reaſon from analogy, we ſhould not heſitate to ſay, that there is in nature a principle, which ſtrongly prompts us to behave with lenity and indulgence to the fair ſex; as almoſt the whole of the irrational creation preſents us with a picture of ſuch behaviour: the cock, when he has found any proviſion, calls his hens together to partake of it; and the males of all the feathered kind, for the moſt part, provide for the females while hatching. Among quadrupedes, though there appears leſs indulgence, and even leſs aſſiſtance on the part of the male, yet the former is in many caſes very diſtinguiſhable, and the latter not altogether unknown to the diligent obſervers of nature. No male of any ſpecies of animals we are acquainted with, will fight with, or uſe a female of the ſame ſpecies rudely, unleſs highly provoked; and even then, he will correct her with lenity and ſeeming reluctance. But while we reaſon on this ſubject, if we truſt to analogy, it will certainly miſlead us. And when we turn ourſelves from reaſoning upon principles, to the obſervation of facts, a ſlight ſurvey of man, in his ſavage ſtate, will ſoon convince us, that he has no natural propenſity, nor inſtinct, which determines him to uſe the females of his ſpecies with tenderneſs and indulgence; or if he has, it is, like many other natural inſtincts, totally obliterated in his youth by habit and education. We are told, indeed, by Charlevoix, that ſome of the ſavages of North America will, by no means, be prevailed upon to ſtrike, and hardly even to defend themſelves againſt a woman; but ſhould this be true, it is only a local cuſtom; for we are aſſured almoſt by every traveller, that ſavages, in a variety of parts of the world, on the

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moſt trifling occaſions, beat and abuſe their women without mercy.

We have already obſerved, that power, when not influenced by humanity, is commonly made uſe of only to enſlave. On this principle, we may aſſert, that the moſt general and extenſive cauſe of the ill treatment of women, is the imbecillity of their conſtitutions, and the impoſſibility of aſſerting the rights of nature againſt a ſex ſo much their ſuperiors in ſtrength. The next cauſe, is the inſenſibility of the men, or that ſavageneſs of diſpoſition, which not only eradicates humanity, but prompts only to animal appetite, inſtead of the ſentimental feelings of love; a cauſe which, more or leſs, prevails in almoſt every country, and particularly in thoſe, where ſociety and the various refinements thereon depending, are but little and imperfectly known. Men conſtantly accuſtomed to gain their ſubſiſtence by fiſhing and hunting, are trained up in the exerciſe of every cruelty againſt the brute creation; hence, in their wars, the ſame cruelty diffuſes itſelf upon their antagoniſts and priſoners; and hence too, even the tender and inoffending fair ſex are ſubjects upon which they exerciſe that ferocious and unfeeling temper, which, from their earlieſt infancy, has been nouriſhed by their employments and their difficulties; and which neither religion, admonition, nor example, have ever conſpired to reſtrain; nor the ſympathetic feelings of the heart revolted againſt, as barbarous and inhuman. Whatever be the original difference in the feelings of the human heart, we know they are capable of being altered, and made better or worſe by education and example; an inconteſtible proof of which ariſes from the behaviour of the genteel, and common

people of England, who muſt be nearly alike by nature; and yet by education, the employments of life, and the example of low company, the latter are often brutal and ferocious in their manners, while the former are diſtinguiſhed for humanity, and the more exalted feelings of the ſoul.

A THIRD cauſe of the ill-treatment of the ſex is, their general want of proper education and inſtruction. In ſavage life, without any engaging qualification of mind, and deſtitute of every ornament of body, except only a few things which render them more diſagreeable, they have nothing but ſex to engage the attention, and ſoften the rugged nature of the male. In countries a little more cultivated, as in Aſia, though they laviſh every ornament on their perſons, their minds commonly preſent a blank; ſcarcely even here and there ſhaded with the outlines of knowledge and ſenſibility. In moderate climates, women acquire ſenſe and experience, as their charms and beauty expand. In Aſia, if they ever become ſenſible and intelligent, it is at an age when their ſhort and fleeting beauty, which commonly begins to fade at eighteen, is all over. This is one of the ſtrongeſt reaſons why the women of the Eaſt are ſo little eſteemed. In countries, where the manners are finiſhed by the laſt touches of poliſh and refinement; the levities, expenſive follies, and irreſtrainable propenſity to pleaſure and admiration, frequently procure to the ſofter ſex ill-treatment from ours; and force us even to deſpiſe and condemn the heart, which is lodged in the form we adore.

A FOURTH cauſe of the ill-treatment of women is, often, their taking too little care to make themſelves agreeable. This is commonly the caſe in ſavage life, where, if nature has denied them charms,

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charms, they have no other way of attracting the heart; and where, if ſhe has not denied them, the poſſeſſors have not learned to ſet a proper value upon them, nor to improve their power by correſpondent qualifications of the mind. But this is not a caſe only to be met with in ſavage countries; in the moſt cultivated ſtates of ſociety, we often meet the careleſs ſlattern, who diſguſts us with her indelicacy; the conceited beauty, who, truſting to the favours ſhe has received from nature, exacts from us the tribute ſhe thinks due to them, with a petulant preſumption, which fruſtrates all its own intentions; and the hapleſs wanderer from the paths of virtue, who, loſt to honour and to ſhame, lays aſide every thing pleaſing in the manners of the beſt of her own ſex, and adopts every thing diſguſting in the worſt of ours. To theſe characters we may add the unthinking wife; who, as ſoon as ſhe has ſtepped over the threſhold of matrimony, leaves behind her every delicacy, and every ſoft and engaging art, by which ſhe attracted the lover.

In polite countries, women reckon themſelves ill-treated, if they are not beloved, accoſted with reſpect, and even their wiſhes prevented by all the nameleſs little offices of good-breeding: accuſtomed to be conſtantly approached, with an air of ſubmiſſion that borders on adoration, to be conſtantly flattered, on account of their beauty and accompliſhments, and wanting ſagacity to diſtinguiſh mere gallantry from the real ſentiments of the heart, they at laſt become pert and aſſuming, and often rude and ill-natured to ſuch as they think do not offer a ſufficient quantity of the incenſe of praiſe at the ſhrine of their beauty: having arrived this length, they ſoon become objects of contempt, and ſometimes of ill-treatment. No claſs of females are ſo apt to fall into this

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tract as thoſe called beauties; who, though their company is eagerly coveted at every place of public amuſement, are not ſo eagerly ſelected to retire with into that private ſcene of domeſtic life, where the maſk muſt be laid aſide, and the train of flatterers diſcarded.

THE power of appropriating entirely to ourſelves what we love and eſteem, is ſo ſtrongly rooted in our nature, that it has given birth to jealouſy, one of the ſtrongeſt paſſions that convulſe the ſoul; and from this jealouſy ariſes another fruitful ſource of the ill-treatment of women; it is the cauſe that has, time immemorial, ſhut them up in the gloom of perpetual impriſonment in the Eaſt, and debarred them from every joy that can flow from friendſhip, and from ſociety. It is the cauſe which, in Hindoſtan, and more particularly in Perſia, has ſubjected them not only to the chaſtiſement of an enraged huſband, but even to death itſelf, for an offence no greater than looking at a ſtranger. But we turn from ſuch ſcenes of horror, to view the other ſide of the picture.

Cauſes of the good treatment of women.

THE general cauſes of the proper treatment of women are ſimple, and may be all comprehended in the education of the one ſex, and the behaviour of the other. It is want of education and inſtruction, that makes the ſavage; and it is the proper application of them, that form the man of ſociety and the gentleman. A man brought up in any of the polite countries of Europe, is, from his earlieſt infancy, taught to do a thouſand good offices to the fair ſex; to honour and indulge them; and, as he grows up, to provide for, and defend them: hence every kindneſs, and every duty he can perform to them, are ſo imperceptibly interwoven with his nature, that he takes them for nature itſelf: but leſt this

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attachment of education ſhould not be ſtrong enough to form a kind of balance of power between the two ſexes, the Author of nature has wiſely provided, that, at a certain age, love ſhould ſpring up to lend its aſſiſtance, and add a motive ſtill more powerful, than even cuſtom and education, to induce us to do the fair ſex every kind and indulgent office, which the delicacy of their ſituation, and the weakneſs of their nature, may ſtand in need of. But we muſt here carefully diſtinguiſh between that love, which, in civil life, is a mixture of animal appetite and ſentimental feeling; and that which, in ſavage life, is animal appetite only. The laſt, though it may prompt men, when immediately under its impulſe, to be fawning and complaiſant, muſt be but ſhort and inconſtant in its operations; and, conſequently, unable to reſtrain the common rudeneſs and oppreſſion of the men, or raiſe the women to any degree of conſequence and dignity. The firſt, more ſteady and uniform, inſpires with an unremitting attention to do good offices, to protect, and ſcreen from oppreſſion the weakneſs which ſavages deſpiſe; with a generoſity of ſentiment, which does honour to politeneſs and to humanity. Nor are the fair regarded and defended only by ſuch individuals as are connected with them by love, friendſhip, and other motives of paſſion and intereſt, but by the generality of men in civil life, from ſentiments of gallantry; and by every wiſe legiſlature, which, in proportion to the weakneſs of that ſex, exerts itſelf the more ſtrenuouſly to protect their perſons and intereſt.

SUCH, and many more, are the happy effects which the fair ſex experience from education and from love; but in the individuals, with whom they are more nearly connected, good ſenſe, and humanity of temper, are likewiſe neceſſary, in order to eſtabliſh their

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ſecurity from ill-uſage. There are in domeſtic life, a thouſand little incidents where ſentiments will unavoidably jar; but ſhould even this happen ſo frequently, as to interrupt all peace, and be productive of a conſtant acrimony of temper, a man of ſenſe, when connected with a woman whom he cannot love in his heart, will never degrade himſelf ſo as to uſe her ill; and will be ſorry that he is obliged to pity, where he would wiſh to love.

THAT propriety of female behaviour, which inclines the men to favour, and treat the ſex with the greateſt indulgence, which the manners and cuſtoms of the country they reſide in will admit of, is of various kinds, and would be tedious to run over. In ſavage countries, it conſiſts moſtly in performing the taſks of labour aſſigned them; in yielding the moſt abject ſubmiſſion to their huſbands; and taking proper care of the children they have by them. In the Eaſt, it conſiſts in reſigning themſelves with a ſeeming alacrity to confinement; being perfectly ſkilled in all the arts of pleaſing, and avoiding, with the utmoſt circumſpection, every cauſe of jealouſy. In Europe it is more unlimited; it conſiſts in good-nature, ſenſibility, delicacy, chaſtity, the domeſtic virtues, and a thouſand other qualities; which, when joined to a competent ſhare of beauty and female ſoftneſs, are almoſt ſufficient to ſooth the moſt rugged nature, and change the cruelleſt temper into gentleneſs and humanity.

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Of the Character and Conduct of Women.

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AS the circle of female action is commonly more narrow and circumſcribed that that of the other ſex, ſo their good or bad character is alſo, for the moſt part, compriſed under fewer virtues and vices: and in the Eaſt, where they are by confinement totally excluded from action and obſervation, we may ſay with Pope, That they have hardly any character at all.

AT the head of the qualities, which make up the good or bad character of each ſex, there is generally placed ſome cardinal virtue, or vice; which is ſet, as it were, in the fore-ground; and to which all the reſt of the figures in the groupe are ſubordinate. Thus what is the moſt highly eſtimated in the men, is courage and ſenſibility; and what gives the higheſt luſtre and poliſh to the women, is modeſty, and that ſoft and gentle temper, which is ever ready to ſooth affliction, and to pity diſtreſs. As theſe two virtues form the great outlines of the character of the fair ſex, a large portion of what we have to ſay on the preſent ſubject, will neceſſarily be employed in inquiring, how far they have followed the paths that lead to them, or deviated into thoſe that lead to their oppoſite vices, from the earlieſt ages of antiquity to the preſent time.

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Unchaſtity an early vice in the world.

FROM the very beginning almoſt of time, as we may learn from ſome hints thrown out by Moſes, and conjecture from the rude and uncultivated ſtate of ſociety, we have no great reaſon to believe, that modeſty and chaſtity were among the favourite virtues. The reaſons aſſigned for the deſtruction of the world by the deluge; thoſe aſſigned for the poſterior deſtruction of Sodom; and the conduct of Lot's daughters, are all too evident proofs of our aſſertion. Proceeding forward to the patriarchal ages, the ſcene is but little altered; for we there find, that when Abraham had gone down into Egypt to avoid a famine, he had ſuch an opinion of the diſſoluteneſs of the people of that country, that he was afraid they would murder him, in order to get poſſeſſion of his wife; and to avoid that danger, agreed with her to ſay, that ſhe was his ſiſter: a falſity and meanneſs, which he again repeated, when he afterwards journied with her in Gerar, in the land of the Philiſtines; a meanneſs, which plainly points out, that he would rather have ſuffered her tamely to have been debauched, by the people of any country into which he went, than run any riſk on her account. This puſilanimous example was likewiſe copied by his ſon Iſaac, when he went with Rebecca, his wife, into the ſame country of Gerar; and the ſpeech of Abimelech to him, on finding that he had deceived him, plainly points out the ideas they then entertained of debauchery; "one of the people "might lightly have lain with her."

THE ſevere revenge, however, taken on the Sechemites, for the rape of Jacob's daughter, ſeems to inſinuate, that the men paid no little regard to the chaſtity of their women; at leaſt to thoſe that were of her rank and condition; though the anſwer theſe avengers made to their father Jacob, when he reproved them

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for their cruel perfidy, plainly ſhews us, that public proſtitution was in that ſimple and early period far from being unknown. "Should he deal with our ſiſter (ſaid they), as with an harlot?" And we are ſorry to obſerve, from the relation of the adventure of Judah, with Tamar, his daughter-in-law, who had perſonated a harlot, in order to force him to procure her a ſecond huſband, that, in his days, that profeſſion ſeems neither to have been uncommon, nor attended with any great degree of infamy. In periods ſo exceedingly remote as theſe we are now delineating, the general conduct of the Hebrew women, with regard to chaſtity, ſeems extremely uncertain. We may, however, with great propriety lay it down as a rule, that the virtues and vices of the two ſexes always keep nearly an equal pace with each other; and as we find the patriarchs themſelves no way famous for continence, we cannot reaſonably expect that their women were diſtinguiſhed by this virtue: a conjecture, which is but too well confirmed by the ancient hiſtory of the Jewiſh nation; Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, had all of them ſeveral concubines as well as wives. David rioted in concubinage, and even in adultery; nor ſeems to have been checked in either, till he alſo became a murderer. Solomon ſet no bounds to his voluptuous appetite; and, from every neighbouring nation, ſelected a numerous train of women; among whom he ſpent a great part of his time in lewdneſs and debauchery.

Not remarkable for humanity.

If the women, in the times we are ſpeaking of, were not remarkable for chaſtity, we have ſcarcely any better reaſon to think that they were more conſpicuous for the ſympathetic tenderneſs of the ſex. Sarah, in a cruel manner, turned out the concubine and child of her huſband, almoſt without proviſion, and in a deſert country, where they had both nearly periſhed of hunger; nor

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was ſhe inſtigated by jealouſy to the barbarous deed; it was the common cuſtom to have concubines, and ſhe herſelf had given Hagar to her huſband. Jael, in cool blood, drove a nail into the temple of Siſera, to whom ſhe had promiſed protection, and perfidiouſly ſlew him as he lay aſleep in her tent. Delilah, a Philiſtine, who was married to Samſon, treacherouſly betrayed the huſband of her boſom to her countrymen. But not to draw the character of a people from ſingle inſtances, it was cuſtomary among the nations which ſurrounded the Iſraelites, in theſe times, to offer human victims to their idols; a cuſtom which they alſo ſometimes imitated, when the parents of both ſexes attended, while their children paſſed through the fire to Moloch. Theſe, and ſeveral other inſtances we could give, but too plainly ſhew that mankind in general were then immerſed in rudeneſs and cruelty, vices from which even the ſofter ſex were not in the leaſt exempted.

THE character of ſome of the other nations, in the remote periods we are now conſidering, was, perhaps, ſtill leſs famous for purity of female manners than that of the Hebrews. In Egypt, the ſtory of Potiphar's wife preſents us with an almoſt unparalleled inſtance of female effrontery; but as it would be unjuſt to ſtigmatize a whole nation, from the impudence and lewdneſs of one woman, let us look into their hiſtory; a hiſtory which will but too well convince us that the proofs of female manners being debauched in Egypt, are far from being confined to this ſingle inſtance.

Egyptian women, their character.

PHERON, ſucceſſor to Seſoſtris, the firſt king of Egypt, having become blind, was told by an oracle, that he ſhould recover if he waſhed his eyes with the urine of a woman who had never known

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known any man beſides her own huſband; he began by making trial of that of his own wife, and afterwards of that of many other women, to no purpoſe, and was at laſt happily reſtored to ſight by the urine of an obſcure woman; upon which he beſtowed upon her great rewards, and ordered, that all thoſe who had given him ſuch proof of their incontinence ſhould be put to death. Chemmis, another of their kings, who is ſaid to have erected the largeſt Egyptian pyramid, being at a loſs how to procure materials for carrying on ſo extraordinary a work, at laſt, conſidering how much the people were given to debauchery, ordered his own daughter to become a proſtitute, and to demand that each of her paramours ſhould bring a large ſtone to be employed in the building carried on by her father; theſe ſtones ſhe collected in ſuch numbers, that they were found not only ſufficient to finiſh the great pyramid already begun, but with the remainder ſhe erected a ſmall one to her own memory. Though both theſe ſtories carry along with them the moſt evident marks of fable; yet, as fable was ſo frequently made uſe of in the Eaſt, to convey inſtruction or reproof, they might nevertheleſs be highly characteriſtic of the manners of the times: but, beſides, if we may form any judgment of the character of a nation from its cuſtoms and religious ceremonies, which, if we may be allowed the expreſſion, are the trueſt pictures of its heart, they will teach us to entertain but a low opinion of the decency and decorum of the ancient Egyptian women.

THEY had a cuſtom in Egypt of going ſeveral times every year to celebrate a feſtival of Diana at Bubaſte; as they commonly went by water, the boats were promiſcuouſly crowded with men and women, and when they paſſed near any town or village, they ſtopped,

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ſtopped, in order to give an opportunity to the women on board to make a kind of trial of ſkill with theſe on ſhore, in the moſt obſcene language and geſticulations; when at laſt, after a variety of theſe indecent ſkirmiſhes, they arrived at the place of their deſtination, they celebrated the feſtival in honour of their goddeſs, by rites which would have diſhonoured the vileſt of the race of mortality, by drinking, rioting, and committing ſuch debaucheries that ancient authors have been aſhamed fully to deſcribe them. Among other nations we find but too many examples of men endeavouring to debauch their women when living; the Egyptians afford us the only one we meet with, where they ſacrilegiouſly defiled themſelves with them when dead. It was a cuſtom in this country, immediately after death, to deliver the body to the embalmers, to be by them prepared for burial; but young women of great beauty were at laſt, contrary to this cuſtom, obliged to be kept till the ſymptoms of putrefaction began to appear, leſt the embalmers, as had ſometimes happened, ſhould abuſe their dead bodies.

NOTWITHSTANDING of this public licentiouſneſs, the laws of Egypt ſeem not to have been in the fault, but the conſtitutions of the people appear to have been warm and libidinous beyond meaſure; nor were the civil laws only well calculated for the preſervation of chaſtity, and ſecuring the weaker ſex from every inſult upon their honour, but thoſe of religion alſo conſpired to aſſiſt them. The Egyptians ſeem to have been the firſt among the ancients who paid a proper reſpect to the temples of their gods; the neighbouring nations polluted them with every ſpecies of luſt and intemperance; the Egyptians hallowing them, ordained that men ſhould religiouſly abſtain from women within

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their ſacred walls, and that ablutions, ſimilar to thoſe inſtituted by Moſes, ſhould be uſed after the commerce between the ſexes.

We have already obſerved that tenderneſs for their own offſpring is one of the moſt powerful feelings of the female heart; but that, powerful as it is, a variety of cauſes have often weakened, and ſometimes totally obliterated it. To theſe already taken notice of we ſhall now add, that this has in Egypt been done by ſuperſtition, in Greece and Rome, by a romantic patriotiſm; the Egyptian women rejoiced when their children were devoured by their ſacred crocodiles; the Greeks and Romans, when they were ſlain in the wars, undertaken to defend or enlarge their country: would we were able to ſay, that in modern times maternal tenderneſs did not often ceaſe to ſhew itſelf on account of cauſes more frivolous and not leſs culpable. The religious character of the Egyptian women can only be drawn from that of their men; thoſe were ſuperſtitious beyond almoſt a poſſibility of belief, they worſhipped animals of every kind, and even paid an extravagant degree of adoration to the vileſt of reptiles and inſects; and what is not a little extraordinary, the animal that was adored and worſhipped in one diſtrict, was frequently held in the utmoſt abomination in another. As women have been in all countries leſs apt to examine and reaſon upon matters, than men, they have ever been more credulous and ſuperſtitious; we may therefore ſuppoſe that every whimſical extravagance in the Egyptian religion had the women in general as its votaries.

Motives to induce good behaviour in Egypt.

In no country was there ever ſuch powerful motives deviſed, to oblige people to preſerve an untainted character as in Egypt; it is well known to our learned readers how much the honours

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of ſepulture were valued among the ancients, and the horrid ideas they annexed to the ſituation of that ſoul whoſe body lay unburied. The Egyptian legiſlature, availing itſelf of this univerſal prejudice, ordained, That no perſon ſhould obtain burial till a rigorous examination had paſſed into his conduct when living; for this purpoſe the corpſe was ordered to be carried into an iſland in the lake Moeris, where the people ſat as judges upon it, and decreed, or denied it burial, according as the character came out good or bad. The boatman who was firſt employed in carrying dead bodies over to this ſolemn trial, being named Charon, has given origin to the poetical fable of Charon ferrying ſouls over the Styx, or from this world to the next. From the few ſcattered hints only which we have remaining of ancient Egypt, we can with little certainty ſay any more of their character or conduct; ſo different are the accounts we meet with concerning them, ſome affirming that the women did all the buſineſs without doors, while the men confined themſelves within; others aſſerting, that the men confined all their women from jealouſy, and never allowed them the uſe of ſhoes, that they might not be able to walk abroad; but theſe accounts may relate to different periods, or to different diſtricts of the ſame country.

Proſtitution eſtabliſhed by a law at Babylon.

THAT modeſty and chaſtity, which we now eſteem as the chief ornament of the female character, does not appear in times of remote antiquity to have been much regarded by either ſex. At Babylon, the capital of the Aſſyrian empire, it was ſo little valued, that a law of the country even obliged every woman once in her life to depart from it. This abominable law, which, it is ſaid, was promulgated by an oracle, ordained, That every woman ſhould once in her life repair to the temple of Venus;

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that on her arrival there, her head ſhould be crowned with flowers, and in that attire ſhe ſhould wait till ſome ſtranger performed with her the rites ſacred to the goddeſs of debauchery.

THIS temple was conſtructed with a great many winding galleries, appropriated to the reception of the women, and the ſtrangers who, allured by debauchery, never failed to aſſemble there in great numbers, being allowed to chuſe any woman they thought proper from among thoſe who came there in obedience to the law. When the ſtranger accoſted the object of his choice, he was obliged to preſent her with ſome pieces of money, nor was ſhe at liberty to refuſe either theſe, or the requeſt of the ſtranger who offered them, whatever was the value of the money, or however mean or diſagreeable the donor. Theſe preliminaries being ſettled, they retired together to fulfil the law, after which the woman returned and offered to the goddeſs the ſacrifice preſcribed by cuſtom, and then was at liberty to return home. Nor was this cuſtom entirely confined to the Babylonians; in the iſland of Cyprus they ſent young women at ſtated times to the ſea-ſhore, where they proſtituted themſelves as a tribute to Venus, that they might be chaſte the reſt of their lives. In ſome other countries, a certain number only were doomed to proſtitution, as it is ſuppoſed, by way of a bribe, to induce the goddeſs of debauchery to ſave the reſt.

WHEN a woman had once entered the temple of Venus, ſhe was not allowed to depart from it till ſhe had fulfilled the law; and it frequently happened that thoſe to whom nature had been leſs indulgent than to others, remained there a long time before any

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any perſon offered to perform with them the condition of their releaſe. A cuſtom, we think, ſometimes alluded to in ſcripture, and expreſsly delineated in the book of Baruch: "The wo-"men alſo, with cords about them, ſitting in the ways, burn "bran for perfume; but, if any of them, drawn by ſome that "paſſeth by, lie with him, ſhe reproacheth her fellow that ſhe "was not thought as worthy as herſelf, nor her cord broken." Though this infamous law was at firſt ſtrictly obſerved by all the women of Babylon, yet it would ſeem that, in length of time, they grew aſhamed of, and in many caſes diſpenſed with it; for we are informed that women of the ſuperior ranks of life, who were not willing literally to fulfil the law, were allowed a kind of evaſion; they were carried in litters to the gates of the temple, where, having diſmiſſed all their attendants, they entered alone, preſented themſelves before the ſtatue of the goddeſs, and returned home. Poſſibly this was done by the aſſiſtance of a bribe, to thoſe who had the care of the temple.

Reflections on this law.

IT has been alleged by ſome of theſe authors, who can find nothing in antiquity but virtue and excellence, that the oracle which inſtituted this law, conſidering Venus as a goddeſs who delighted in debauchery, not only meant to ſatisfy her by this public act of proſtitution, but alſo to induce her to preſerve, during the reſt of their lives, the innocence of ſuch women as had thus ſhewn that they were her votaries, by voluntarily dedicating themſelves for once to her ſervice; as alſo to raiſe in the minds of their women a deteſtation of unchaſtity, by the ſhame they muſt have ſuffered in expoſing themſelves to ſo public a proſtitution. But whatever may be ſaid in its juſtification, a law of this kind is in its nature indefenſible, and, from whatever motive

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it proceeded, muſt have been but ill calculated to promote virtue and morality; as it is obvious, even almoſt to the ſlighteſt obſerver, that ſuch is the diſpoſition of human nature, that the barrier, which ſeparates between vice and virtue, once overleaped, it from that moment loſes half its reſtrictive power, and in a little time becomes no barrier at all. It appears, therefore, that no great degree of credit is due to Herodotus, when he affirms that the Babyloniſh women having once fulfilled the obligation impoſed upon them by this law, could never after be prevailed upon to deviate from modeſty and virtue; nor to Ælian, who ſays, that the Lydians and inhabitants of the iſle of Cyprus, who had ſimilar laws, which theſe laſt carried even farther than the Babylonians, obliging every woman to abſtain from marriage till ſhe had gained a fortune ſuitable to her rank by proſtitution, were ever after inflexibly virtuous.

SUCH aſſertions are too groſs to be ſwallowed by an impartial obſerver of human nature; and, beſides, are every where falſified by the conduct of the Babyloniſh women. The ſacred writings of the prophets are almoſt in every page filled with reproaches againſt them for their lewdneſs and debauchery; but not to reſt the validity of what we have ſaid entirely on that foundation, the ſame Herodotus, who had told us of the inviolable chaſtity of the Babylonian women, informs us a little after, that when their city was taken by Cyrus, ſuch was the licentiouſneſs of the place, that fathers, without any ſcruple, proſtituted their own daughters for hire. And Quintus Curtius not only confirms the ſame thing, but adds, that even huſbands were not aſhamed on that occaſion to deliver their wives to ſtrangers for money; actions which are in no reſpect conſonant to the virtuous character pretended by

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ſome to be derived from the vicious ſource of public proſtitution. Were it neceſſary to multiply proofs of the licentious character of the Babylonian women, we could inſtance the prodigious number of courtezans, which were among them, whoſe profeſſion did not render them contemptible in the public opinion, as it always does where virtue and modeſty prevail. The drunkenneſs of the ſex, who uſed frequently to attend the convivial meetings of the men, where, themſelves not leſs convivial, they often ate, drank, and made merry, till by degrees diveſting themſelves of all modeſty, they ſometimes finiſhed the debauch in the original ſtate of mother Eve; nor was this the practice of the meaneſt of the ſex only, nor of the moſt lewd and abandoned, it was that of women of all ranks and conditions; but we cannot wonder at finding a people lewd and debauched, when the ceremonies of their religion, and the divinities they worſhipped, taught them the hopeful leſſon.

WHEN error and abſurdity have the ſanction of religion to ſupport them, our own times afford us too many proofs of what miſchiefs they may be productive; and were we not daily convinced of this by experience, we would hardly be able to give credit to what has been now related of the Babylonians. But they were not the only people of antiquity led aſtray in this manner; there ſcarcely exiſted one ſingle religion, in the times we are ſpeaking of, the rites of which were not ſolemnized either with cruelty or debauchery, or both; and ſcarcely was there one god or goddeſs adored, who was not famous for luſt and intrigue; ſuch, in a notorious degree, was Jupiter, the greateſt of their deities, ſuch was Vulcan, ſuch was Venus, and ſuch the great Syrian goddeſs, whoſe temples were crowded with the votaries

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of luſt, who diſſeminated that vice among the people, greatly to the corruption of the manners of both ſexes. But rites of cruelty and debauchery were naturally enough ſuggeſted as proper modes of worſhipping divinities, who delighted in uncleanneſs and in blood.

Of the Maſſagetæ and Lydians.

THIS corruption of manners reigned but too univerſally among the ancients. The Meſſagetæ, a people of Scythia, being confined to one wife, while the nations around them were indulged with the liberty of polygamy and concubinage; in order to put themſelves in ſome degree on a footing with their neighbours, introduced a kind of community of wives, and a man who had an inclination to the wife of his friend, only carried her into his waggon or hut, and hung up a quiver while ſhe was there, as a ſign, that they might not be interrupted. In this manner were decency and the moſt ſacred ties of matrimony publicly violated; but what decency, what regard to the moſt ſolemn inſtitutions can we expect in a people who were ſo rude and barbarous, that when any of their relations became old, they met together, and along with ſome cattle ſet apart for the purpoſe, ſacrificed them to their gods; then having boiled together the fleſh of the human and the more ignoble victims, they devoured it as a moſt delicious repaſt? The Lydians were ſtill more debauched than the Maſſagetæ. In the reign of Jardanes, ſo ungovernable was their luſt, that Omphale, the king's only daughter, could ſcarcely, even within the walls of the royal palace, find ſhelter from the licentious multitude. Omphale at length ſucceeding to the throne of her father, puniſhed with the utmoſt ſeverity ſuch as had formerly abuſed her; on the women, whom it appears ſhe conſidered as not leſs criminal than the men, ſhe revenged herſelf

in a ſingular manner; ſhe ordered, that, over all her kingdom, they ſhould be ſhut up with their ſlaves.

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Of the Scythians.

THE Scythians, whoſe character is far from being the moſt abandoned of the ancients, ſeem not to have had much cauſe to boaſt of the chaſtity and fidelity of their women; the greateſt part of their men having on ſome occaſion made an expedition into Aſia, were detained there much beyond their expectation, when their wives, either impatient of their long abſence, or deſpairing of their return, took their ſervants and ſlaves, and inveſted them in all the poſſeſſions and privileges of their abſent huſbands. Theſe, ſome time after hearing that their maſters were about to return, fortified and intrenched themſelves, in order to hinder them from entering into their own country, and claiming their wives and poſſeſſions. The Scythians having advanced to their ſlaves, ſeveral ſkirmiſhes were fought between them, with doubtful ſucceſs, when one of their leaders adviſed his countrymen not to fight again with their own ſlaves as with equals, nor to attack them with warlike weapons, which were ſigns of freedom, but with ſuch whips and ſcourges as they had formerly been accuſtomed to make them feel. This advice being put in execution, the whips recalled their ideas of ſlavery, and all the puſillanimity naturally attending it; they threw down their arms and fled in confuſion, many of them were taken and put to death, and not a few of the unfaithful wives deſtroyed themſelves, to avoid the reſentment of their injured huſbands. Though this ſtory has been by different authors varied in ſeveral of its circumſtances, yet as ſo many have agreed in relating it, we have not the leaſt doubt of its authenticity, eſpecially as we are aſſured that the Novogorodians, whoſe city ſtands in Sarmatian Scythia, had

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had formerly a coin ſtamped in memory of it, with a man on horſeback ſhaking a whip in his hand; and it is ſuppoſed that the ancient cuſtom in Ruſſia, which is now happily forgot, of the bride preſenting the bridegroom on the nuptial night with a whip, originated from this ſtory of the Scythian wives.

Perſian women, their character.

We have already related the manner in which the Babyloniſh women were admitted to the riotous feaſtings of the men; a cuſtom which, only with a few more reſtrictions, took place alſo in Media and Perſia, as appears from the ſtory of Amintas, king of Macedon, already alſo related; a ſtory which inconteſtibly proves that, in the times we are conſidering, the Perſian women were of as eaſy virtue as the men could wiſh them; but the voluptuous and libidinous character of that court cannot be better delineated, nor painted in ſtronger colours, than we find it in the book of Eſther, where we have a relation of Ahaſuerus, one of their monarchs, carrying his refinements in debauchery to ſuch a length as we have no inſtance of any where elſe on record.

'Now when every maiden's turn was come to go in unto king 'Ahaſuerus, after that ſhe had been twelve months, according to 'the manner of the women, for ſo were the days of their purifi-'cation accompliſhed; viz. ſix months with oil of myrrh, and ſix 'months with ſweet odours, and with other things for the purify-'ing of the women.

'Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatſoever ſhe 'deſired was given her to go with her out of the houſe of the 'women into the king's houſe.

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'In the evening ſhe went out, and on the morrow ſhe returned 'into the ſecond houſe of the women, to the cuſtody of Shaaſgaz, 'the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines; ſhe came in 'unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and 'that ſhe were called by name.'

SUCH was the expence, and ſuch the refinement neceſſary to fit women for the arms of the Perſian monarch; and ſuch was the perpetual impriſonment and continence to which he condemned the hapleſs wretches, who, with all this parade of voluptuouſneſs, were deſtined for one night only to the hateful pre-eminence of his bed; in ſhort, it was in the court of Perſia, where we may properly ſay, that lawleſs love reigned triumphant, where mothers mixed in inceſtuous commerce with their ſons, daughters with their fathers, and ſiſters with their brothers. Artaxerxes Memnon, having fallen in love with his own daughter Atoſſa, and himſelf entertaining ſome ſcruples, his paſſion was fomented, and theſe ſcruples diſſipated by his mother: "Are not you, ſaid "ſhe, ſet by the gods over the Perſians, as the only rule of "what is becoming or unbecoming, virtuous or vicious?" A ſpeech, which ſtrongly indicates that daring ſpirit of woman, which when urged by any of the more violent paſſions, has often overleaped every barrier, and born down every difficulty, from which male nature has ſhrunk back with trembling and reluctance. Another of the Perſian kings, entertaining ſome ſcruples on an occaſion of a ſimilar nature, convened the magi to give him their opinion, "We can find no law, ſaid they, in Perſia, to authorize "a man to marry his own daughter, but our laws authorize a "king to do whatever he pleaſes."

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Inſtance of the effect of jealouſy.

In countries where there is, as in Perſia, an unlimited liberty of polygamy and concubinage, jealouſy in the fair ſex is a paſſion much weakened by the variety of objects that divide it, and the reſtraint laid on it by the deſpotiſm of the men; we ſhould not therefore expect to find it operating very ſtrongly. But even here, where the king is the ſevereſt deſpot of the country, and women only the tools of his luſt, and ſlaves of his power, we meet with inſtances of this paſſion exerting itſelf in the moſt cruel manner. Xemes, among many other amours, had conceived a paſſion for the wife of his brother Maſiſtus, which he proſecuted for a long time by promiſes and threatenings, without any ſucceſs; when, quite tired with ſo many fruitleſs efforts, he at laſt changed his attack from the mother to her daughter, who, with much leſs oppoſition, yielded herſelf to his wiſhes. Ameſtris, his queen, having diſcovered the amour, and imagining that the daughter only acted by the direction of her mother, from that moment reſolved on the ſevereſt revenge. By an ancient cuſtom in Perſia, the queen had a right, on the king's birth-day, to demand of him any favour that ſhe thought proper; Ameſtris aſked that the wife of Maſiſtus ſhould be delivered into her hands, whom ſhe had no ſooner received than ſhe ordered her breaſts, noſe, tongue, and lips to be cut off, and thrown to the dogs, and that ſhe ſhould be detained to ſee her own fleſh devoured by them.

Inſtances of modeſty.

Among a people ſo abandoned, and ſo much the ſlaves of cruelty and luſt, a people who made every thing ſubſervient to voluptuouſneſs and debauchery, it is natural to think that modeſty among the fair ſex could ſcarcely have any exiſtence. This, however, was not univerſally the caſe; a few women, even in Perſia, were far from being deſtitute of that modeſty and ſenſibility

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which are the ornament of their ſex, and the delight of ours. Atoſſa, the daughter of Cyrus, and wife of Darius, being attacked with a cancer in her breaſt, and thinking it inconſiſtent with the modeſty of her ſex to diſcover the diſeaſed part, ſuffered in ſilence till the pain became intolerable, when, after many ſtruggles in her own mind, ſhe at laſt prevailed on herſelf to ſhew it to Democedes, her phyſician. We might mention more particular inſtances of the modeſty of the Perſian women, but we paſs over them, to take notice of an anecdote of a lady in a neighbouring kingdom, which ſhews, that, in the times under review, there were ſome women ſuſceptible of ſentiment and feeling; things which are not frequently met with in the Eaſt. Tygranes and his new-married wife being taken priſoners by Cyrus, Tygranes offered a great ranſom for her liberty; Cyrus generouſly releaſed them both without any reward; as ſoon as they were alone, the happy couple, naturally falling into a diſcourſe concerning their benefactor; What do you think, ſaid Tygranes, of his aſpect and deportment? I did not obeſerve either, anſwered the lady. Upon what then did you fix your eyes, ſaid Tygranes? Upon the man, returned ſhe, who generouſly offered ſo great a ranſom for my liberty.

Depravity of manners almoſt univerſal.

So little was modeſty and chaſtity cultivated among the ancients, that many nations ſeem to have had no idea of either. The Auſi, a people of Lybia, cohabited ſo promiſcuouſly with their women, that the whole of the children of the ſtate were conſidered as a community till they were able to walk alone, when, being brought by their mothers into a public aſſembly of the people, the man to whom a child firſt ſpoke was obliged to acknowledge himſelf its father. The wives of the Bactrians were, through a

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long ſeries of years, famed for licentiouſneſs; and cuſtom had given ſuch a ſanction to their crimes, that the huſbands had not only loſt all power of reſtraining them, but even durſt hardly venture to complain of their infidelity. In Cyprus, an iſland ſacred to Venus, the very rites of their religion were all mingled with debauchery and proſtitution. And the Lydians, and many other nations, publicly proſtituted their daughters, and other female relations, for hire. But to multiply inſtances of the depravity of ancient manners would be endleſs; mankind, even when bridled by the ſtrongeſt penal laws, and reſtricted in their paſſions by the ſacred voice of religion, are but too often, in the purſuit of unlawful pleaſures, apt to diſregard both; what then muſt they have been before ſociety, before laws exiſted, and when religion lent its ſanction to encourage the vices and deprave the heart? In theſe times we have the greateſt reaſon to believe that debauchery reigned with but little controul over two-thirds of the habitable globe.

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The ſame Subject continued.

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AS the hiſtory of the nations we have hitherto been conſidering is ſo enveloped in thoſe clouds of darkneſs which obſcure antiquity, we ſhall leave it, to make ſome obſervations on the character and conduct of the women of Greece.

General idea of the Greeks.

OF this ſo much diſtinguiſhed, ſo much admired people, who, for many ages, ſhone ſo illuſtrious in arts and arms, and whoſe panegyric has been ſounded ſo loud in ancient and in modern hiſtory; we ſincerely wiſh that a regard for truth did not oblige us to give ſo indifferent a character. But when we have ſaid that they ſhone in arts and arms, we have completed their eulogium. When we conſider them as patriots, they appear diſtinguiſhable; when we conſider them as men, and as citizens of the world, they almoſt excite our horror. Other nations made laws to make nature better, and to enforce humanity. Thoſe of ſome of the Grecian ſtates were calculated to eradicate nature and humanity from the human heart. In ſhort, in whatever view we contemplate this people, we find them remarkable only for an unnatural auſterity of manners, for the moſt inflexible ſeverity, and a life hardly ſoftened by one agreeable ſhade in the whole picture.

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THE character we have hitherto drawn of the fair ſex is calculated to excite but few of theſe pleaſing emotions; we would wiſh to warm our boſoms whenever we contemplate objects ſo dear to us, but we write the hiſtory of Women, not their panegyric; truth, therefore, ſtill obliges us to exhibit to view characters hardly more amiable or engaging than thoſe we have already drawn.

IN a preceding chapter we have obſerved that, during the whole of what are called the heroic ages, the hiſtory of Greece is nothing but a compound of the moſt abſurd fable; from that fable it however appears, that their gods and men employed much of their time and ingenuity in ſeducing, ſtealing, and forcibly debauching their young women, circumſtances which naturally ſuggeſt an idea that thoſe women who could not be obtained by any other means muſt have been virtuous; nor indeed does it appear that they were then much leſs ſo than in thoſe ſucceeding periods, when the Greeks flouriſhed in all their ſplendour, and were reckoned a highly poliſhed people; nay, they were, perhaps, more ſo, for infant colonies and kingdoms commonly diſplay more virtue than thoſe already arrived at maturity; the reaſon is plain, the firſt have not yet attained riches, the ſources of idleneſs and debauchery, the laſt have attained them, and are corrupted. But the Greeks, even in the infancy of their exiſtence as a people, ſeem to have been remarkably vicious, for we hardly meet with any thing in their early hiſtory but murders, rapes, and uſurpations; witneſs the tranſactions of the kingdom of Mycene, of Pelops, and his deſcendants. The rapes of Io, Proſerpine, Helena, &c. all of which ſtain the character of their gods and men with the foulеſt infamy; and as it has never happened

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pened in any nation that the one ſex has been exceedingly vicious, and the other not participated of its crimes, we may conclude that the Greek women were, in the heroic ages, far from being famous for any of the moral virtues. The greateſt part of the Grecian princes who aſſembled at the ſiege of Troy, were guilty of many of the moſt enormous crimes, while their wives, not leſs flagitious, murdered almoſt the whole of them after their return; a thing nearly incredible, when we conſider that in thoſe times cuſtom had condemned the wife who had loſt a huſband to perpetual widowhood; but even cuſtom, though often more regarded than all the laws of heaven and earth, muſt in time yield to a general corruption of manners.

Laws in Greece favourable to debauchery of manners.

BUT to proceed to times of which we are better informed. The women of other nations were indecent through the ſtrength of their ungovernable paſſions; ſome of the Greek women were obliged to be indecent by law. In Sparta, what virtue, what decorum can we expect, when even the ſtrongeſt temptations to vice had the public ſanction of the legiſlature? In the heroic ages, while ignorance and brutality of manners prevailed, we are not much ſurpriſed to find the women conducting the men to the baths, undreſſing them, and attending to dreſs and rub them when they came out; but in Sparta, famed for its ſalutary laws, and when Greece was in its moſt poliſhed condition, we are amazed to find that both ſexes reſorted to, and bathed together in the public baths. And this amazement is ſtill heightened, when we are aſſured that here alſo plays were acted by order of the legiſlator, where young people of both ſexes were obliged to fight, and to dance naked on the ſtage, that the men, according to his ideas, might be thereby excited to matrimony. What

were

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were the conſequences of the indecencies we have now mentioned? The intention of Lycurgus, if he really had any ſuch intention, was but little attended to, and it is agreed on all hands, that both ſexes went to thoſe plays only for the ſake of debauchery; and further, that, diſguſted by this ſhameleſs expoſure, the men paid leſs regard to the women, and the women became leſs virtuous, and at laſt grew diſſolute to ſuch a degree as to be thereby diſtinguiſhed from all the other women of Greece. Euripides, and ſome others of the Greek authors, beſtow upon them epithets which decency will not allow us to tranſlate, nor were theſe epithets the overflowings of the gall of ſatyric poets and violent declaimers only, but the cool and conſiderate reflections of the impartial hiſtorian; but we would not be underſtood as altogether confining diſſoluteneſs and debauchery to the women of Sparta, thoſe of many of the other ſtates were little inferior to them. In Thracia and Bœotia they every third year held a feſtival in memory of the expedition of Bacchus into India, at which both married women and virgins, with javelins in their hands and diſhevelled hair, ran about like furies bellowing the praiſes of the god, and committing every diſorder ſuggeſted by madneſs and folly.

Deference ſhewn to courtezans.

WHEREVER public proſtitution becomes ſo faſhionable that it is attended with no diſgrace in the opinion of the male, and with exceedingly little in that of the female ſex, there, we may aſſure ourſelves, the morals of the women are highly contaminated; a circumſtance of which Athens afforded the moſt glaring proof. In that city courtezans were not only kept in a public manner by moſt of the young men of faſhion, but greatly countenanced, and even publicly viſited by Solon their lawgiver, who applauded

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ſuch young men as were found in the ſtews, becauſe their going to theſe places rendered them leſs apt to attempt the virtue of modeſt women. But Athenian courtezans were not only viſited by their great lawgiver, but alſo by the celebrated Socrates, and moſt of their other philoſophers, who, not content with going frequently to ſee them themſelves, even ſometimes carried their wives and daughters along with them; a circumſtance of which we do not recollect to have heard in any other country, and which could not but tend to give theſe wives a mean opinion of virtue, when they ſaw the preference that was given to vice; and when ſuch of their own ſex as thus publicly deviated from the paths of chaſtity were ſo openly eſteemed and regarded, it was natural for thoſe of a different character to pay the leſs regard to that chaſtity, the practiſing of which gained them no ſuperior privilege nor advantage.

Cauſes of this deference.

THE whole hiſtory of ancient Greece preſents us with courtezans enjoying uncommon reputation and honour; to account for this, we muſt lay it down as a fundamental principle, that our ſex has a natural inclination to the company and converſation of the other. Now, in Greece, modeſt women were all ſo ſtrictly confined, that none were allowed to ſee or converſe with them but their neareſt relations; and from this confinement it naturally followed, that they were uncultivated, and ignorant of learning, and of almoſt every thing that was tranſacting in the world; they were, therefore, but ill qualified to entertain or amuſe the men with their converſation. The Grecians had a natural taſte for the beautiful, a taſte which was greatly improved by their ſtatuaries and painters; but the beauties of their modeſt women were rendered inviſible by veils, and unengaging by aukwardneſs. The very reverſe was the caſe with the courtezans, they improved

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their charms by every art, ſhewed them unveiled in every public place, and all had acceſs to their company and to their houſes. Not ignorant of the diſadvantages that other women laboured under, they availed themſelves of, and improved, their own more happy ſituation; they dedicated a great part of their time to the arts and ſciences, to the knowledge of public affairs, to ſpeaking with elegance and propriety, and, above all, to the arts of pleaſing, which, whenever properly managed by women of beauty, have an aſcendency over us that they themſelves ſeem but half acquainted with. Hence it is not difficult to ſee how the Grecian proſtitutes crept into ſuch conſequence; they had art and nature on their ſide, and modeſt women being all impriſoned, they had no rivals to contend with.

Preſent inhabitants of Greece like their anceſtors.

THE preſent inhabitants of Greece ſeem to have pretty nearly copied the pattern of antiquity; unchaſtity, with them, and even the trade of proſtitution, are conſidered but as very trifling affairs, which any woman may be guilty of without loſing her character. A Greek girl will agree with a Frank for any limited time he pleaſes: the Subaſci will as eaſily grant them a licence to live together for that time; and ſhould any one be caught with her, during the continuance of it, they would both be fined, and exhibited through the neareſt city, mounted together on an aſs. At Venice, the courtezans of the preſent time ſeem nearly on a footing with thoſe of ancient Greece. By the ſtrongeſt ſumptuary laws, the Venetian nobility are reſtrained from ſpending their money almoſt on any thing but their miſtreſſes; and while the modeſt women feel their inclinations curbed in almoſt every article of luxury and expence by theſe laws, the courtezans, either above or below their notice, evade them altogether.

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Grecian women deſtitute of the tenderneſs of their ſex.

As the female form is of a ſofter and more delicate nature than that of the male, ſo their minds are generally more finely attuned to the gentler feelings of tenderneſs and humanity; but the Grecian women, either by nature, or more probably by cuſtom, were in this reſpect miſerably deficient. At an annual feſtival, celebrated in honour of Diana, all the children of Sparta were whipt till the blood ran down on the altar of the goddeſs. Under this cruel ceremony, which was inflicted, as they pretended, to accuſtom them to bear pain without murmuring, ſome, almoſt every year, expired. The inhuman barbarity was performed in the preſence of the whole city; the fathers, and what our female readers will hardly credit, even the mothers, beholding their children bathed in blood, and ready to expire with pain, ſtood exhorting them to ſuffer the number of laſhes aſſigned them, without a groan or a complaint. It may be alleged here, that women being ſpectators and encouragers of a cruel ceremony, is no proof of their want of proper feelings, but only an inſtance of the power of cuſtom. A doctrine to which we cannot altogether aſſent, being perſuaded, that there are many of the fair-ſex, of a compoſition ſo humane and tender, that even cuſtom could not reconcile them to barbarity; but allowing it to have that power, what folly were the men guilty of in inſtituting ſuch a ceremony? they were robbing the women of every thing valuable in the female mind, and labouring to make them what they were not intended to be by nature.

But this inhuman cuſtom was not the only proof that the Greek women were diveſted of that female tenderneſs which we ſo much admire in the ſex. There was in Greece a cuſtom, if poſſible, ſtill more barbarous; as ſoon as a boy was born at Sparta,

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he was viſited by a deputation of the elders of each tribe; if he appeared to be of a weakly conſtitution, and not likely to become a ſtout and healthful member of their ſtate, they judged him not to be worth the trouble of rearing; and therefore ordered him to be thrown into a quagmire, at the bottom of the Mountain Taygeta. This was valuing human beings, exactly as we would do an ox or an aſs; and entirely ſetting aſide all the moral turpitude of murder. It was only, however, practiſed at Sparta; and we ſhould have hoped, that, even there, it was contrary to the inclination, and without the conſent, of the women; were we not aſſured by a variety of authors, that the Spartan dames, in every circumſtance, almoſt entirely governed their huſbands. To the barbarous cuſtoms, now mentioned, we ſhall add only one more. To ſo weak and expiring a ſtate was the paternal inſtinct of nature reduced among the Greeks, that they frequently, as we have already related, expoſed ſuch children as they were not able, or did not chuſe, to maintain *. A barbarity which, more or leſs, prevailed in all the Grecian ſtates; except at Thebes, a city, where, to the immortal honour of the inhabitants, it was ſo much abhorred, that, by their laws, it was capitally puniſhed. We ſhall finiſh this ſubject, by obſerving, that the Spartan matrons received the news of their ſons having been ſlain in battle, not only without any ſigns of grief, but even with an appearance of extravagant joy and ſatisfaction, which they took the moſt early opportunity of ſhewing in public. Thoſe ſame women, however, who pretended to have imbibed ſo much heroiſm, that they were ſtrangers to every fear, but ſuch as aroſe on account of their country, when they ſaw Epaminondas, after the battle of Leuctra,

* Though the Greeks might expoſe infants, they could not ſell a daughter, or a ſiſter, unleſs ſhe became a whore.

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marching his victorious army towards Sparta, teſtified by their behaviour, that they were ſubject to fears of another nature; and that all their joys and ſorrows aroſe not ſolely from the proſperity or adverſity of their country. They ran up and down the ſtreets in terror and deſpair, filling the air with ſhrieks, and transfuſing their own timidity into the men, cauſed more diſorder than the approach of the victorious army.

Other vices of the Greek women.

WHEN we come to the hiſtory of the matrimonial compact, we ſhall ſee how the Grecian women behaved to their huſbands; and ſhall at preſent ſum up the reſt of their character, by obſerving, that at Athens, even drunkenneſs appears to have been among the number of their vices; as is evident by a law of Solon, in which it is enacted, that no woman ſhall be attended by more than one ſervant when ſhe goes abroad, unleſs when ſhe is drunk. It would ſeem that the Athenian women alſo made uſe of the darkneſs of the night to ſcreen them in their intrigues; for another law of Solon ordains, that no woman ſhall walk abroad at night, unleſs ſhe intends to play the whore; and from ſeveral other ordinances of this legiſlator, it plainly appears, that to keep women within the bounds of that decorum proper to their ſex, was a matter of no ſmall difficulty; for, to the laws we have juſt now mentioned, he was obliged to add others, which ſhew that the ſex were only to be governed by coercive meaſures. He ordained, that no woman ſhould go out of the city with more proviſions than could be purchaſed for an obolus, nor with a baſket higher than a cubit; and if a woman went abroad at night, ſhe was to be carried in a waggon, preceded by a flambeau: from all which it ſeems evident, that the deſign of Solon was to make the Athenian women decent and virtuous. If Lycurgus had the ſame in-

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tention in the laws that he gave the Lacedemonians, we cannot help thinking that he had but ill ſtudied human nature; for, as a learned author of the preſent age has obſerved, though nakedneſs of both ſexes is no incentive to luſt, and though the inhabitants of countries where no clothes are uſed, are not on this account leſs virtuous than their neighbours, where they are uſed, yet there may be modes of clothing which more powerfully excite the paſſions, than the moſt abſolute nakedneſs. Of this kind, in our opinion, was the dreſs of Sparta. We ſhall have occaſion afterward to deſcribe it, and at preſent ſhall only obſerve, that it has been exclaimed againſt by a variety of the writers of antiquity.

Of the Roman women.

THOUGH ſuch is the general character of the Greeks, we have happily no inſtance of a corruption of manners having ſpread itſelf over a whole nation, in ſuch a manner as to leave nobody free from the contagion. In the midſt of licentiouſneſs and barbarity, at leaſt in theſe periods, that were ſubſequent to the ſiege of Troy, the Grecian women afford us ſeveral inſtances of chaſtity, conjugal fidelity, and maternal affection. In the heroic ages, or thoſe periods when their ſtates were in their infancy, they appear to have been abandoned almoſt to every ſpecies of wickedneſs; but when we turn to the Romans, we find the caſe quite otherwiſe. In the earlier periods of the Roman republic, before the wealth poured in from innumerable conqueſts had introduced luxury and diſſipation, no women were more famous for their virtues, none more infamous afterward for their vices. The whole hiſtory of Rome, for ſeveral ages after its foundation, bears teſtimony to the tenderneſs, frugality, and chaſtity of her women. Of this nothing can be a ſtronger proof, than the long period that intervened between the foundation of the republic and the firſt divorce; a period of five hun-

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dred and twenty years, though the men had a power of divorcing their wives almoſt at pleaſure. To this proof we could add a great variety of others, but ſhall only mention the ſtory of the rape of Lucretia, which in the ſtrongeſt manner demonſtrates the value which the Roman women ſet upon the moſt unſpotted chaſtity. Lucretia, being violated in ſecret, could not have found the ſmalleſt difficulty in concealing what had happened; and beſides, ſhould it have been diſcovered, the fraud and force made uſe of againſt her were ſufficient to have quieted her conſcience, and exculpated her to her huſband and the public from every imputation of criminality: yet, ſo exalted were her ideas of chaſtity, that ſhe was reſolved not to give back to the arms of her huſband, a body even involuntarily polluted, nor to ſurvive the guiltleſs ſtain which her honour had ſuffered; but calling together her friends, in the preſence of her huſband, ſhe revealed to them the ſecret of the rape that had been committed upon her; and while conjuring them to revenge her injured name, ſhe ſtabbed herſelf in the breaſt with a dagger ſhe had concealed under her garments for that purpoſe.

THE care taken by women to preſerve their chaſtity will always be in proportion to the value ſet upon it by the men. When the women find that the men pay but little regard to this virtue, that they are as much careſſed, and have as good a chance for a huſband after they have treſpaſſed the rules of it as before; the ſtrongeſt obligation laid upon them to preſerve it, is then taken off. In the earlier periods of the Roman republic, this ſeems to have been the cauſe of ſuch inviolable chaſtity: the men had the higheſt regard for it; they not only avoided ſaying any thing inconſiſtent

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conſiſtent with purity of manners, any thing that could give offence to modeſty, in their ſerious hours; but even in their gay and ſportive humours, when the watch is apt to ſlip aſide from the door of the lips, never tranſgreſſed the bounds of decency, nor indulged in frolic and dalliance, even with their own wives, before a third perſon: they ſlighted and deſpiſed the woman who had voluntarily yielded herſelf to an unlawful embrace; nor did any thing hurt their honour ſo much, as to have a wife or a daughter violated; and methods of the moſt extraordinary nature were often taken to prevent or revenge ſuch inſults.

HUSBANDS and fathers, valuing chaſtity more than life, ſeveral times killed their wives and daughters, when they had no other means of preventing them from being raviſhed; and women themſelves, fired by this example, not unfrequently ſacrificed their lives to preſerve their honour. Virgineus, when he had tried every method to ſave his hapleſs daughter Virginea from the tyrant Claudius, who, under pretence of claiming her for his ſlave, wanted only to have her in his own power, that he might debauch her; having obtained leave to ſpeak to her before ſhe ſhould be delivered to the tyrant by the judgment of the court, took her in his arms, and wiping the tears from her eyes, drew near to ſome butchers ſhops, which ſtood in the Forum, where cauſes were publicly tried, and where Virginea had juſt been adjudged the property of Claudius. There, ſnatching up a knife, and turning to his daughter, "My dear child (ſaid he), this is "the only way left to ſave thy liberty and thy honour. Go, Vir-"ginea! go to thy anceſtors whilſt thou art yet free and unde-"filed!" Thus ſaying, he plunged the fatal knife in to her breaſt;

and

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and ſuch was the regard of the Romans to chaſtity, that almoſt the whole of the people roſe in arms, to revenge the injured father, and the murdered daughter.

COULD any thing more forcibly demonſtrate the manner in which the Romans exerted themſelves to preſerve the delicacy, as well as the honour of their women, it would be the following circumſtances. Manlius, a patrician and ſenator of Rome, having inadvertently ſaluted his wife in the preſence of his daughter, and being by the Cenſors accuſed of an indecency; the Senate, after ſolemnly conſidering the matter, ſtruck him off the liſt of their order. Julius Cæſar, having heard ſome indecent reports of his wife, immediately divorced her, without enquiring whether ſhe was guilty or innocent; and being aſked the reaſon of ſo ſevere a treatment, "I would not (anſwered he) have the wife of Cæſar even ſuſ-"pected." When ſeveral of the Veſtal virgins had been at one time corrupted, the Romans reared a temple to Venus Verticordia, or the turner of hearts; and worſhipped her with ſuch ceremonies, as they imagined would incline her to turn the hearts of the Roman women to that chaſtity which they were in danger of forſaking. When ſuch were the private, ſuch the public inſtances of the regard ſhewn to chaſtity by the men; when the women forfeited every thing that was dear and intereſting to their ſex; if they deviated from it, can we wonder, that the Roman ladies, while this was the caſe, were remarkable beyond any thing that hiſtory has handed down to us, for this moſt exalted of female virtues?

SUCH was the ſtate of chaſtity in Rome, till the Romans extended their conqueſts into Aſia; and returning, brought along with

Change in the manners of the Roman women.

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with them the amazing wealth, as well as voluptuous manners, of the nations they had plundered; when all the boaſted patriotiſm of the one ſex began to give way to the moſt ſhameful venality, and all the chaſtity of the other, to the force of the faſhionable vices juſt introduced among them. This venality of the men was whetted by the now luxurious manner of living, and extravagant taſte for pageantry and ſhow, and gratified by getting into offices of the ſtate, and plundering the provinces, or ſelling the intereſts of their country. Women too, not leſs fond of being publicly conſpicuous, had no other method of acquiring money to become ſo, than proſtitution. Such an innovation of manners altogether overturned every ſober plan of frugal œconomy, and turned the ideas of both ſexes entirely upon riches, and the parade of the public ſhews and diverſions, which theſe enabled them to give and to attend. This immoderate deſire of ſhews brought a low and ſhameleſs freedom into faſhion, and women contended with each other, who ſhould bribe higheſt to obtain the favours of a player. Debauchery reduced fertility; but as fertility was not their wiſh, they learned to procure abortions, that their pleaſures might ſuffer the leſs interruption; at laſt, jaded even with theſe pleaſures, which they had tried the moſt unnatural means to vary, their lewdneſs became too powerful to be reſtrained by law, and bore down every obſtacle that oppoſed its courſe. The men, tinged with the licentious manners of Aſia, and contaminated with every crime, now paid nearly the ſame reſpect to her who had forfeited her title to chaſtity, as to her who had not. Hence lewdneſs and debauchery, neither afraid of ſhame nor of puniſhment, became faſhionable among every rank and condition of women, while chaſtity was conſidered only as an antiquated virtue.

COURTS

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COURTS are but too frequently the ſeminaries of vice. This was evidently the caſe at Rome. The Empreſſes generally took the lead in lawleſs indulgence: the example of the great is commonly followed by the little: from the court, a ſcene of the moſt ſhameleſs libertiniſm, hardly to be paralleled in hiſtory, diſſeminated itſelf all over Rome. Women danced naked on the ſtage, bathed promiſcuouſly with the men, and, with more than maſculine effrontery, committed every ſort of irregularity. By the unbounded licence thus given to unlawful pleaſures, matrimony became unfaſhionable, and was conſidered as a confinement and a burden, not conſiſtent with Roman freedom and independence. To theſe ideas alſo the conduct of the married women did not a little contribute, and raiſed in the huſbands ſuch a diſguſt at marriage, that even Metellus the Cenſor, who ought to have been the protector of that inſtitution, made the following ſpeech to the people againſt it: "If it were poſſible for us to do without wives, "we ſhould deliver ourſelves from this evil; but as nature has "ordained, that we cannot live very happily with them, nor "without them, we ought to have more regard to our own pre-"ſervation, than to tranſient gratifications." Rome is the only place that ever furniſhed an inſtance of a general conſpiracy among the married women to poiſon their huſbands.

A VARIETY of laws were from time to time deviſed by the Romans to ſtop the progreſs of public proſtitution. Among others it was ordained, that all courtezans ſhould take out a licence from the court of the Ædiles; which they ſhould renew once every year, and without which they ſhould not be allowed to carry on their trade; that their names, and the price of their favours, ſhould be wrote upon the doors of their houſes. Theſe, one would have

Laws of the Romans to reſtrain this licentiouſneſs.

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imagined, were ſuch conditions as no woman who had the leaſt remaining ſpark of ſenſibility would have agreed to. But the torrent of vice was not to be ſtopped ſo eaſily: women, who were wives and daughters to Roman knights, were not aſhamed to apply for ſuch licences; and the infection was even reaching higher. Viſtilla, a lady of a Prætorian family, with an unparalleled effrontery appeared in public court before the Ædiles, and declaring herſelf a proſtitute, demanded a licence to enable her to exerciſe her trade. Debauched as the Romans then were, under a prince ſo diſſolute as Tiberius, their fears were alarmed; and the ſenate enacted ſeveral laws to reſtrain at leaſt women of rank from degrading themſelves and families by a conduct ſo infamous: they ordained, that no woman whoſe father, grandfather, or huſband, was a Roman knight, or of any higher quality, ſhould be allowed to take upon her the trade of proſtitution. The debauchery of the women was alſo the occaſion of the Voconian law, which we have already mentioned: but when corruption had interwoven itſelf ſo dexterouſly into the manners and cuſtoms of the Romans, laws became too feeble to bring on a reformation. The emperor Titus prohibited all public ſtews: the prohibition was but little regarded. When Severus mounted the throne, he found on the roll of cauſes to be tried, no leſs than three thouſand proſecutions for adultery: he had formed a ſcheme of reformation; from that moment he abandoned it as impoſſible.

Religion of the Romans in ſome caſes a ſcene of profligacy.

BUT it was not the manners and cuſtoms of the Romans only, that were tinged with debauchery: that vice at laſt inſinuated itſelf into their religious ceremonies alſo. Fond of imitating the Greeks, the Bacchanalian myſteries, which they celebrated, were at length introduced into Rome, and filled the city with a ſcene of horror

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horror and profligacy, as appears from Livy, hardly equalled in the annals of any country. "An obſcure Greek (ſays he) came from "Etruria, but brought with him none of thoſe arts which that moſt "accompliſhed people have introduced, to improve our minds and "perſons; a little paltry prieſt and fortune-teller, not one that "ſhocked the minds of the people, by publicly profeſſing to make "a gain and trade of ſome religious ceremonies which he openly "taught, but he was the miniſter of ſecret rites; he had his "myſteries, in which but few were at firſt initiated, but which "were afterwards communicated to men as well as women, with-"out diſtinction or reſtraint. To theſe rites an entertainment "of the fineſt wines and moſt exquiſite dainties was added, to "entice the greater numbers to become members of the ſociety.

"WHEN drinking had deprived them of their ſenſes, and when "the night, with the mixed company of young and old, and of "men and women, had put an end to all modeſty, every ſort of "vice began at once to be practiſed, as every one found the means "of thoſe luſts at hand, to which he was by nature moſt addicted. "Nor were theſe crimes confined to one ſpecies only, the promiſ-"cuous debauchery of men and women of rank and family; but "from thence iſſued falſe witneſſes, falſe ſeals, falſe oaths, and "falſe deeds; and even poiſons, and aſſaſſinations, ſo ſecret, that "they could not ſometimes find the bodies to bury them. Many "crimes were perpetrated by fraud, many by force, which no "perſon knew of; for amid ſuch a ſcene of debauchery and "ſlaughter, attended with the howlings of the people, and the "noiſe of the trumpets and cymbals, it was impoſſible to hear "the cries of thoſe who were calling for aſſiſtance. At firſt, the "extent of the city, and a willingneſs to endure an evil of this

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" ſort, made it paſs unnoticed; but Poſthumus the Conſul was at
" laſt informed of it.

" At firſt their chapel was appropriated to women only, no
" man being on any account admitted into it: there were three
" days ſet apart in each year for initiation into the Bacchanalian
" myſteries; and the women, in their turn, were uſually created
" prieſteſſes. Paculla Minia Campana altered every thing, as if
" directed by the gods ſo to do: ſhe firſt initiated men, Menius
" and Herennius, her own ſons; and inſtead of confining the
" time of initiation to three days in the year, ſhe extended it to
" five times every month, and fixed the time in the night. By
" this means the ſacred rites became common, the men and women
" made but one company, and the darkneſs increaſed their licen-
" tiouſneſs: no wickedneſs, no abomination, was left unpractiſed.
" If there was any one who reſented their inſults, or came behind
" them in wickedneſs, he was ſacrificed as a victim; nor did they
" bluſh to glory in this as the height of their religion.

" The men propheſied with fanatical toſſing of their bodies, as
" if they were poſſeſſed; and the women, with their hair diſhe-
" velled, and dreſſed after the manner of Bacchanals, ran to the
" Tyber with burning torches, which they plunged into the wa-
" ter, and drew out ſtill in a flame. Whoever refuſed to join
" with them, or partake of their guilt, or ſubmit to their inde-
" cencies, they bound on a machine, and hurried out of ſight to
" ſome unfrequented wood, pretending that the gods had taken
" him. There were among them many of the firſt quality of
" both ſexes; and after two years they made a rule, that no per-
" ſon ſhould be initiated who was more than twenty years of age;

" judging,

"judging, that ſuch were moſt likely to be ſeduced to their "errors, and ſubmit to their debaucheries."

Courtezans were generally ſtrangers.

To all theſe inſtances of the flagitious character of the Roman women, we may add, that they appear to have been the firſt who practiſed the trade of proſtitution in their own country; it ſeems to have been a cuſtom from the earlieſt antiquity, that the proſtitutes of every nation, were women who reſorted to them from other nations, and were called ſtrangers; hence a ſtrange woman, and an harlot, generally ſignify the ſame thing in ſcripture; and hence the repeated injunctions which Solomon laid upon his ſon, not to give his ſtrength to ſtrange women. This cuſtom of women betaking themſelves to another country when they became proſtitutes, we have reaſon to believe, was univerſal among the ancients; whether it was, that every people, willing to have it believed that their own women were more virtuous than thoſe of their neighbours, would not ſuffer them to proſtitute themſelves at home; or whether ſuch women as took upon them this ſhameful trade, were inſtigated by ſome little remains of modeſty, to leave their own country and practiſe it among ſtrangers; we ſhall not take upon us to determine: but we are aſſured, that the Greeks, however debauched and licentious, commonly adhered to this cuſtom, while the Romans, who broke through every reſtraint, paid no regard to it.

Cruelty of the Roman women.

But lewdneſs and debauchery were not the only vices of the Roman women; through the whole of their exiſtence as a nation, the Romans were remarkable for their cruelty. Several of their laws, as that which gave to fathers a power of life and death over their children, and to huſbands a power hardly leſs extenſive over their wives, are a proof of this: but it appears in a ſtill

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a ſtill ſtronger light, when we conſider the barbarous treatment of their ſlaves, by whips and tortures; and the deluges of blood which were ſhed almoſt by every uſurper of the empire, ſometimes from ſuſpicion, oftener perhaps from mere wantonneſs and barbarity of nature, the ſpectacles of wild beaſts, tearing criminals and captives to pieces, and gladiators hacking one another down for the amuſement of the public; and laſt of all, their behaviour towards theſe unhappy nations who were conquered by their arms. Nor was Roman cruelty only a male vice, the ſofter ſex were far from being proof againſt the contagion. In the two hundred and twentieth year of Rome, Tullia, the daughter of Severus, then king of the Romans, having, with her huſband Tarquin, conſpired to aſſaſſinate her father, and place themſelves on the throne in his ſtead; the order for the atrocious deed being given in a tumult of the people, the infamous Tullia, mounted her chariot with an air of triumph to return to her houſe; in the ſtreet through which ſhe was drove, the murderers had juſt left the king's body bleeding and hardly breathleſs; the diſmal ſpectacle ſtruck the charioteer with horror, he checked his horſes, and petrefied with amazement, could not proceed! Why do not you go on; cries Tullia, what ſtops you? Alas! ſaid he, turning about to her as he ſpoke, That is the body of the king, your father! At theſe words, ſnatching up a ſtool that was in the chariot, and throwing it at his head, Go on, cried ſhe, and do not be afraid of driving over a dead body. The driver obeyed, and the blood of the father is ſaid to have ſtained the chariot and the cloaths of the inhuman daughter. Antony having ordered Cicero to be beheaded, and the head to be brought to him, when it arrived, his wife, Fulvia, laid hold of it, ſtruck it on the face, uttered many bitter execrations, and placing it between her knees, drew out the tongue, and pierced it with a bodkin. To theſe we might

might eaſily add many more inſtances of the cruelty of the Roman women, but we drop a ſubject ſo diſagreeable. CHAP. XI.

AFTER the Romans became acquainted with Aſia, in whatever light we view their women, they ſcarcely exhibit any amiable qualities, except ſome imperfect relics of their ancient patriotiſm, a virtue, which unleſs exerciſed with the greateſt moderation, ſcarcely ever adorns the female character. As wives, we have ſeen that the Roman matrons were frequently unchaſte; as mothers, not leſs frequently careleſs and unnatural, luxurious and extravagant beyond meaſure; at laſt, they became almoſt entirely the creatures of ambition, and of pleaſure; even religion, which almoſt in every age and country, ſeems to have been more devoutly cultivated by the women than the men, does not appear at Rome to have had any ſuperior power over the female heart; their women attended at proceſſions, when any public calamity was to be averted, and were ſometimes made prieſteſſes of certain temples; but we read of few peculiar acts of their piety, and of few ſacrifices which they offered to propitiate the gods of their country.

SUCH is the general character of the Roman women; were we to deſcend to more particulars, we might give inſtances almoſt without end of their depravity, and not a few of their virtue. Before the Republic was contaminated with the riches, which from every quarter of the plundered globe flowed to Rome, they were in general the beſt of wives, of mothers, and of citizens; having by their mediation, advice, and money, ſeveral times ſaved the ſinking ſtate; and it is with pleaſure we remark, that even amid the general depravity we have been delineating, there

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still appeared many amiable and virtuous characters, who bravely ſtemmed the tide of popular corruption, and in ages overrun with every vice, ſtood forth the advocates of virtue, of maternal tenderneſs, and of conjugal fidelity; preſerving their children and huſbands, from falling victims to the horrid proſcriptions of Octavius, Antony, Lepidus, Nero, and many others, who, with a barbarity which can hardly be equalled in hiſtory, cauſed to be murdered in cool blood one half of the nobility of Rome.

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The ſame ſubject continued.

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LEAVING the Romans, and proceeding in our enquiry, we again deſcend into the regions of hiſtorical obſcurity, where we are preſented with a group of nations and people, now hardly diſtinguiſhable from each other, and of many of whom, we ſcarcely know any thing but the names. Of ſuch people it would be vain, as well as ridiculous, to attempt a minute and circumſtantial character; we ſhall, therefore, content ourſelves with ſketching the outlines of it among that group of northern nations, which we have no authentic accounts to enable us to delineate more diſtinctly.

Virtues of the ancient northern women.

THOUGH in a ſtate of the utmoſt uncultivation of manners, and attached to religions which inculcated but few of the precepts of morality; and in many caſes directly contradicted them; the women of the ancient northern nations were not deſtitute of virtue and of excellence; early in life, they learned that modeſty which adorned their character; and that induſtry which often maintained themſelves and their huſbands, when theſe failed to procure ſubſiſtence by their hunting, or their depredations: educated by chaſte mothers, and fortified in female virtue by every example around them, chaſtity became almoſt an innate principle in their minds, and daily acquired ſtrength by the contempt which was thrown by the men upon thoſe who diſregarded it; a contempt ſo great, that no woman could violate her chaſtity, without precipitating herſelf into the moſt diſmal certainty of perpetual celibacy, as

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none could in this caſe entertain even a diſtant hope of pardon, or of a huſband, who was not, as in modern times, to be obtained by riches, nor the alliance of the great, but only by perſonal attractions, moſt ſtrictly attached to unſpotted perſonal virtue.

TACITUS draws a beautiful picture of ancient German ſimplicity and chaſtity, in the following words: "A ſtrict regard for the "matrimonial ſtate characteriſes the Germans, and deſerves our "higheſt applauſe. Among them female virtue runs no hazard "of being debauched by the outward objects of the ſenſes, or of "being corrupted by ſuch ſocial gaieties as inflame the paſſions; "chaſtity once forfeited is never forgiven; vice is not made the "object of mirth and raillery, nor is faſhion pleaded as an excuſe "for being corrupt, or for corrupting others; good cuſtoms and "manners avail more among thoſe barbarous people, than good "laws among ſuch as are more refined." We are apt to place the greateſt purity of manners, in particular ſtates of cultivation and refinement; experience, however, ſhews us that we are often in the wrong. From this account of Tacitus, the ancient Germans appear to have exceeded in ſome points of morality, the moſt poliſhed and inſtructed nations of Europe; nor were the Goths behind them, they deemed purity of manners their diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic, and therefore they ſaid, "Though we puniſh for-"nication in our own countrymen, we pardon it in the Romans, "as they are by nature and education weak, and uncapable of "reaching to our ſublimity of virtue."

Laws protecting chaſtity.

BY an ancient law of Iceland, any one who kiſſed a woman againſt her inclination, was condemned to exile; and even he who obtained her conſent, ſubjected himſelf thereby to a fine of three marks of ſilver. We have in a former chapter taken notice of

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of ſome laws of this nature among the northern nations, and ſhall here add, that they were in general ſo ſolicitous of the honour of their women, and took ſuch care that no indecency ſhould be offered to them, that their laws in moſt places preſcribed the manner in which the two ſexes ſhould behave to each other. The Goths prohibited even a ſurgeon from bleeding a free woman, unleſs in the preſence of her father, mother, brother, ſon, or ſome other near relation; and fixed a fine upon a man who preſumed to touch a woman againſt her will, according to her quality, and the part of her body he touched. In other places, a fine was alſo impoſed on him who kiſſed a woman, except in ſporting, at convivial meetings, or on returning from a long journey. Theſe, and many other laws of the ſame nature, among the inhabitants of the north, not only ſtood as ſo many centinels on the threſhold of virtue, but by rendering all acceſs to the fair ſex ſo exceedingly difficult, and even dangerous, taught men to look up to them as a kind of ſuperior beings, and ſtamped upon them a value which aroſe nearly to adoration; a value, which they never can attain to, where modern freedom and gallantry make the acceſs to them ſo eaſy; and, where their own vanity prompts them to appear conſtantly in every public place, and cheapen themſelves by a viſible fondneſs to be diſpoſed of. There is not perhaps in nature a more general law, than that which induces us to value every thing in proportion to the pains and labour it has coſt us, the women of the nations we are conſidering, naturally chaſte, proud, and difficult of acceſs, both by cuſtom and by law, were not to be gained by every ſlight attack, nor did they yield to every pretended admirer: nothing but a lover's rendering himſelf worthy of his miſtreſs by valour, and every other acquiſition then in eſtimation, could make her propi-

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tious to his wiſhes; hence he ſeldom got poſſeſſion of the object of his heart, but after a long train of labours and difficulties, and the value he had for her, was meaſured by the retroſpective view of all that he had gone through on her account. But a further diſcuſſion of this ſubject will fall more naturally under the head of courtſhip.

An hiſtorian endeavouring to delineate the characters of people ſo little known, as many of thoſe we have already mentioned, as well as thoſe we are now conſidering, may be compared to an antiquarian, ſolicitous about diſcovering the real ſize of our anceſtors, in the times when they were ſaid to be gigantic; but not being able any where to find an entire ſtatue, or ſkeleton, can only find the foot or hand of a ſtatue, or the bone of an arm or leg of a ſkeleton; when calculating that ſuch parts of a regularly formed body, bear ſuch proportions to the whole, he can diſcover with a tolerable degree of preciſion what the ſize of the whole was. In like manner, though the hiſtorian has only broken and interrupted ſketches of the character of a people, he may, by carefully comparing them together, and tracing the relations they bear to the virtues and vices that make up the whole of a human character, be able to form a tolerable conjecture concerning the people to whom they belong. Thus from every anecdote handed down to us of the women of the north, we may delineate them to have been chaſte, frugal, induſtrious, and poſſeſſed of ſome little ſhare of knowledge, which gave them in many reſpects a ſuperiority over the men, who were to the laſt degree ignorant. With all theſe good qualities they ſeem to have had a mixture of pride and ferocity in their nature, not very conſiſtent with that female ſoftneſs and delicacy which the men in general ſo much admire.

Such,

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Sketches of the middle ages.

Such, perhaps, was nearly the general character of the fair ſex, from the earlieſt infancy of the northern nations, till towards the decline of chivalry, when it began to aſſume a more degenerate appearance, and for ſeveral ages continued to be only a compoſition of brutality and debauchery, from which again it is happily emerged. In the ſixth century, when the paſſions ſeem to have been divided between religion and debauchery, and the churches equally appropriated to the prayers of the ſaint and the profligacy of the ſinner, it was no uncommon thing to ſeize on a woman, carry her by force, or decoy her by fraud, to the church, and there detain and debauch her; nor could her relations, nor the laws, reſcue her from the arms of her raviſher, while he choſe to keep within the walls of the ſacred aſylum. In the reign of Charlemagne, it was a cuſtom in France to collect together all the ſtrumpets they could find, and make them run races for the entertainment of the public. And in the time of Lewis XI. a favourite theatrical entertainment was the Judgment of Paris; when three of the moſt handſome of their female players, naked as they were born, repreſented the three goddeſſes, who ſubmitted themſelves in this condition to the judgment of that youth. Whether it was conſiſtent with female modeſty to be preſent at ſuch entertainments, muſt be judged of from the complexion of the times: we will venture to affirm, however, that no circumſtances could make it conſiſtent with delicacy. We have had occaſion formerly to mention, that the worſhip of polluted deities, and celebration of religious ceremonies remarkable for impurity, have greatly contributed to contaminate the manners; and we cannot help here obſerving, that though the object of chriſtian adoration, and the rites of the chriſtian religion, are the moſt pure and holy, the miniſters of that religion were, in the times we are ſpeaking of,

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quite the reverſe. When almoſt every prieſt, who ſhould have taught by example as well as by precept, gave himſelf up to lewdneſs, and publicly kept often a variety of looſe women about him, what can we expect from the people? When the prieſts and the people were licentious, the women could not eſcape the contagion; every rank was whirled into the vortex of lewdneſs, and the rudeſt vulgarity of manners. The queen of Navarre publiſhed a volume of Tales, almoſt too indelicate for the ear of a courtezan. Queen Elizabeth of England was not only much addicted to ſwearing, but even to the moſt vulgar and familiar kind of oaths, which ſhe uttered in a vulgar and indelicate manner. About her time, however, the manners of Europe were beginning to aſſume that chaſtity and elegance for which we are now ſo happily diſtinguiſhed. But before we ſurvey the character and conduct of the preſent European women, it is neceſſary for us to take a view of the other parts of the globe, and proceed gradually from thoſe ſtates approaching the neareſt to nature, to thoſe where the human ſpecies has received the higheſt poliſh from art.

Chaſtity little valued in ſavage life.

THE nearer that mankind approach to a ſavage ſtate, the leſs difference in every age and in every country is perceivable among them: in this ſtate, their obſervations, their purſuits, are narrow and limited; their attachments few, but ſtrong; and their reſentments laſting and implacable. Beyond theſe, their condition admits of little variation; conſequently their character, which in poliſhed nations is formed and influenced by a thouſand different circumſtances and ſituations, having but few of theſe to operate upon it, is marked with much ſtronger, though fewer and more uniform appearances.

IN

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Character of female ſavages.

In ſavage life, female delicacy has no exiſtence: the moſt abſolute nakedneſs raiſes not a bluſh; nor can any action excite the idea of ſhame; and as chaſtity itſelf has not, in many places, the ſame value ſtamped upon it as in civil ſociety, deviations from it are either conſidered as no fault, or at moſt as a fault of a very trifling nature, which neither draws down on a delinquent the ridicule and contempt of her own ſex, nor the neglect and deſertion of ours. The inſtances we could give of this would be almoſt endleſs. Among the Natches, huſbands voluntarily lend their wives to each other, and married as well as unmarried women, without the leaſt ceremony, offer themſelves to ſtrangers; nay, in ſome places, they even complain to their countrymen, and deſire them to revenge the indignity they have ſuffered, when refuſed by a ſtranger. In the diſtrict of the Hurons, not the leaſt degree of criminality is fixed upon her who offers herſelf to proſtitution: it is a practice, into which girls are early initiated by their parents, and in which the cuſtom of their country continues them through life. In many parts of South America, ſo little reſtraint is laid on the commerce of the ſexes, that it plainly appears to be conſidered as an object not worthy of legiſlation. Don Ulloa reports, that the ancient Peruvians did not knowingly marry ſuch women as were virgins, and if on trial they found them ſuch, were highly affronted at being impoſed upon: and it is ſaid, that in the kingdom of Thibet, no woman who has not been deflowered is reckoned fit for matrimony.

The Brazilian women are ſo far from paying any regard to chaſtity, that they even violate every principle of decency; not being in the leaſt aſhamed to prepare and adminiſter to the men ſtimulating potions, to create or increaſe their natural deſires;

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which when they wiſh to raiſe to an extravagant height, the potions ſometimes prove mortal. At Mindanao, as ſoon as a ſtranger arrives, the natives flock about him, and eagerly invite him to their houſes: the perſon whoſe invitation he accepts, is ſure to offer him a female companion, whom he is obliged to accept, and to return a genteel preſent for the unſolicited favour. This cuſtom, which, beſides implying an abſolute and diſpoſing power in the male, likewiſe ſuppoſes female unchaſtity to be a matter of no conſideration, is obſerved at Pulo Condore, Pegu, Siam, Cochin-China, Cambodia, in ſome places of the Eaſt-Indies, and on the coaſt of Guinea. In Otaheite, chaſtity does not ſeem to be conſidered as one of the virtues, nor is the moſt public violation of it looked upon either as criminal or indecent. The women not only readily and openly trafficked with the Engliſh ſailors for perſonal favours, but were brought by their fathers and brothers for that purpoſe, as to a market; and thoſe who brought them were always abundantly conſcious of the ſuperior value of youth and beauty.

Savage women deſtitute of ſoftneſs.

BESIDES a ſtrict regard to chaſtity, there is in the female character a certain ſoftneſs of temper and diſpoſition, mixed with a kind of timidity and inclination to pity, which may vie with delicacy, beauty, and even with modeſty itſelf, in rendering a woman amiable in the eyes of every beholder. But of this quality ſavage women in every climate are almoſt entirely deſtitute. Brought up amid the ſtorms of rough and unhoſpitable climates; expoſed to the viciſſitudes of hunger and of cold; obliged to procure moſt of their food by carnage and deſtruction; and conſtantly accuſtomed to ſcenes of cruelty; their hearts are ſteeled againſt every ſoft ſenſation; and pity, one of the moſt engaging ornaments of the female

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female mind, reckoned a weakneſs, which it is incumbent on them to ſubdue. We have therefore no reaſon to expect in them any of that engaging ſoftneſs, which conſtitutes the eſſence of female friendſhip, and forcibly engages the heart: nay, ſo far are they, in general, from being ſuſceptible of any of the compaſſionate ſenſations, that the very reverſe is their character.

AMONG many of the tribes of North Americans, the women commonly go out to meet the warriors on their return home; and though theſe warriors have treated their captives, from the moment they fell into their hands, with an inhumanity of which we can hardly form any idea; yet the period of their real ſufferings may be ſaid only to commence at the time they are met by the women. It is almoſt incredible to believe, with what degree of tranſport and rage theſe furies attack them; and he only can form any conception of it, who has frequently witneſſed the power of the paſſions over the female mind, and their concentrated power over the female ſavage; where being but few in number, their whole ſtrength is collected, as it were, into a focus. Has any woman among thoſe who go out to meet the warriors, loſt a huſband, a ſon, a brother, or near relation; though thirty or forty long years have conſpired to blot him out of her remembrance, they have conſpired in vain. Frantic with revenge, ſhe falls on the firſt captive ſhe meets, and violates decency, humanity, and mercy, at every wound. Nor is this the ſhort-lived effort of a ſudden paſſion: ſhe goes on till her bodily ſtrength is quite exhauſted; but the ſame inſatiable thirſt of revenge urging her implacable mind, ſhe no ſooner recovers herſelf a little, than ſhe renews the horrid taſk; a taſk, which, with no other interruption than what is abſolutely neceſſary to refreſh the ferocious tormentors, generally continues in the camp,

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through the whole of the firſt night after the arrival of the women: and when the priſoners are afterward finally condemned, when they are led out to ſuffer, ſuch a ſcene of torture as the hiſtory of no other people ever yet paralleled, and which we think too ſhocking to deſcribe, the women are the principal executioners, or rather relentleſs fiends, who inflict tortures that even hell might ſhudder at.

To thoſe accuſtomed to ſofter manners, and to nations leſs ſullied by ſuch inhuman crimes, this female barbarity muſt appear as unaccountable as it is ſhocking: but it muſt be ſtill more ſo, when we inform our readers, that captive women, though they have not taken up the hatchet, nor come out in an hoſtile manner, are treated with the ſame indiſcriminate rage of cruelty as the men, and fall at laſt victims to the lingering tortures inflicted by their own ſex.

Cruelty to captives not peculiar to America.

SUCH is the ſtate of chaſtity, ſuch that of humanity, among the ſavage women of North America. But from theſe unpromiſing ſpecimens we are not raſhly to conclude, that they are deſtitute of every virtue, and of every excellence. Their inhumanity is not ſo much the effect of nature, as of education. Revenge is a principle, which, from the earlieſt periods of antiquity, has operated ſtrongly on every ignorant and unlettered people. The Iſraelites hardly treated their captives with leſs cruelty than the Americans; they made them paſs through the brick-kilns, and under ſaws and harrows of iron. The practice of almoſt all the ancients was nearly the ſame: every country had its tutelar deities; and it was imagined, that a more acceptable ſervice could not be rendered to theſe, than to ſtain their altars with the blood of the enemies of

that

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that country which they patroniſed; thus, cruelty to captives was almoſt in every country a religious ceremony, which took ſuch hold of the human mind, that the thoughts of the ſufferings of the victims, were totally abſorbed in thoſe of the ſervice done to the deity. But, beſides this, there was among the ancients another principle, which powerfully urged them to inflict various torments on their captives; the manes, or ghoſts, of thoſe who had fallen in battle, were ſuppoſed to roam about in a kind of melancholy mood, till their blood was avenged on their enemies; and, they were even ſometimes ſuppoſed to appear to, and ſolicit their ſurviving friends to this vengeance; which was the more fully accompliſhed, the more horrid the tortures that were inflicted. Strongly excited by the latter, if not alſo by the former of theſe motives, we diſcover that an exuberance of friendſhip to their deceaſed relations, is the ſource from whence ariſes that variety of torments with which they execute their enemies.

Cauſes of this cruelty.

WERE this horrid barbarity of the American women congenial to their nature, or what they delighted in from mere wantonneſs, we ſhould reckon them the moſt execrable of all human beings; but we pity them, when we conſider it as the effect of the moſt unbounded, though miſtaken friendſhip; and indeed, of all the marks which moſt peculiarly characteriſe ſavage life, friendſhip and hatred are the ſtrongeſt. As an injury done to a ſavage, is never to be forgiven; ſo a good action is held in everlaſting remembrance, and commonly attaches him to you in a friendſhip, which adverſity cannot ſhake, which danger cannot terrify, nor even death itſelf turn aſide from your intereſt. In places where chaſtity is required of the ſex, this quality makes them the moſt faithful and inviolable of all wives. Where chaſtity is not required,

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quired, if they are but tolerably well uſed by their huſbands, it binds them in an attachment to their intereſts and perſons, far ſurpaſſing any thing that we ever meet with in civil ſociety. As to their other qualities, they are ſubmiſſive and obedient to their huſbands; patient ſufferers of hunger, cold, pain, and all that variety of wretchedneſs to which their lives are daily expoſed; ſtrenuous exerters of their powers, when ſtimulated by want, but ſeldom bleſſed with a talent for unremitting induſtry; and ſtill ſeldomer, perhaps, with foreſight enough to be productive of œconomy. Like all other ignorant people, the moſt abſolute dupes of ſuperſtition, by which conſtantly deceived themſelves, they conſtantly deceive one another, and ſtill more deceive their men, who take the ravings of a diſtempered female brain, for the infallible ſuggeſtions of the Great Spirit.

In aſcending from theſe ſcenes, where we are preſented with nature in her moſt rude and uncultivated ſhape, to thoſe where ſhe is juſt beginning to put on an appearance ſomething leſs diſguſting, we naturally turn our eyes from the frozen regions and trackleſs waſtes of North America, to the more indulgent climates of Africa and Aſia; though we are ſorry to ſay, that, even in many parts of theſe, we find the progreſs of civil ſociety and cultivation of manners, to have advanced but a very few degrees beyond the Americans.

Of Africa.

In travelling over the vaſt peninſula of Africa, we naturally expect to find, among ſo many different people, a great diverſity of manners and of character; in this, however, we are much diſappointed, for notwithſtanding of the great variety of climates that the Africans inhabit, and different forms of government to which

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which they are ſubjected, they are every where nearly the ſame kind of people; a general ſameneſs and uniformity of ſentiments and uſages, running through the whole of thoſe immenſe regions they poſſeſs, with ſome trifling difference only in the degrees of the ſame qualities; and with this remarkable coincidence of the whole, that theſe qualities are commonly the worſt of thoſe which have diſgraced human nature; inſomuch that among their neighbours it is a proverb, that all the inhabitants of the globe have a mixture of good and evil in them, except the Africans.

When we take a ſurvey of the ancient, and the preſent Africans, it is with ſome ſurpriſe, that while we find their manners and cuſtoms to be nearly the ſame, we diſcover at the ſame time, that every ſpark of genius, and every idea of moral rectitude, ſeem almoſt entirely diſſipated from among them. The names of Hannibal, of Aſdrubal, and Terence, ſhew that they were formerly famous for heroes, and for poets; and after the introduction of the Chriſtian religion among them, the names of Cyprian, Auguſtine, and Tertullian, do credit to their divinity; they were in old time renowned for their induſtry in cultivating the ground, for their trade, navigation, caravans, and uſeful arts; at preſent they are infamous for their idleneſs, ignorance, ſuperſtition, treachery; and above all, for their lawleſs methods of robbing and murdering all the other inhabitants of the globe, as the piratical ſtates of Tunis and Algiers every day demonſtrate.

It would ſeem, that loſt as they are to almoſt every virtue, they ſtill retain ſome ſenſe of their own flagitiouſneſs of character; but as they do not chuſe to amend, their prieſts, or Marabouts, endeavour to juſtify them by the following ſtory: "Noah, ſay "they,

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" they, was no ſooner dead, than his three ſons, the firſt of " whom was white, the ſecond tawny, and the third black, " agreed upon dividing among them his goods and poſſeſſions: af- " ter having come to this reſolution, the greateſt part of the day " was ſpent in ſorting that variety of goods which their father had " left, ſo that they were obliged to adjourn the diviſion of them " till the next morning: having ſupped, and ſmoked a friendly " pipe together, they all went to reſt, each in his own tent. Af- " ter a few hours ſleep, the white brother got up, ſeized on the " gold, ſilver, precious ſtones, and other things of the greateſt " value, loaded the beſt horſes with them, and rode away to that " country where his white poſterity have been ſettled ever ſince. " The tawny awaking ſoon after, and with the ſame criminal in- " tention, was ſurpriſed when he came to the ſtorehouſe, to find " that his brother had been before-hand with him, but reſolving " to make the beſt of a bad bargain, haſtily ſecured the reſt of the " horſes and camels, and loading them with the beſt carpets, " cloaths, and other remaining goods, directed his route to an- " other part of the world, leaving behind him only a few of the " coarſeſt of the goods, and ſome proviſions of little value. When " the third, or black brother, came next morning, in the honeſty " of his heart, to make the propoſed diviſion, and could neither " find his brethren, nor any of the valuable commodities, he " eaſily judged that they had tricked him, and were by that time " fled beyond any poſſibility of a diſcovery. In this moſt afflicting " ſituation, he took his pipe, and ſet him down to conſider on " the moſt effectual means of retrieving his loſs, and being re- " venged on his perfidious brothers. After revolving a variety of " ſchemes in his mind, he at laſt fixed upon watching every op- " portunity of making repriſals on them, and laying hold of, and

"carrying away their property as often as it ſhould fall in his "way, in revenge for the loſs of that patrimony of which they had "ſo unjuſtly deprived him: having come to this reſolution, he not "only continued in the practice of it all his life, but on his death-"bed laid the ſtrongeſt injunctions on his deſcendants to do ſo to "the end of the world."

Female character in different parts of Africa.

FROM this ſhort ſketch of the general character of the Africans, the proſpect before us, when we deſcend to particulars, is but unpromiſing, though in ſome places the gloomy ſcene is here and there chequered with a few of the virtues. Some of the tribes of wandering Arabs are remarkable for fidelity, when they have engaged themſelves in the protection of a ſtranger. Many of them are conſpicuous for their temperance and hoſpitality, and their women, upon the whole, are far from being indelicate or unchaſte. In Egypt, they never appear unveiled, and at public aſſemblies ſit alſo behind a curtain, that they may not be ſeen by the men. Among the Hottentots, though they have no claim to delicacy, they are ſimple and inoffenſive, chaſte and ſubmiſſive to their huſbands. On the banks of the Niger, they are tolerably induſtrious, have a conſiderable ſhare of vivacity, and, at the ſame time, a female reſerve, which would do no diſcredit to a politer country: they are modeſt, affable, and faithful, and an air of innocence appears in their looks, in their language, and gives a beauty to their whole deportment. When from the Niger, we approach toward the eaſt, the African women degenerate in ſtature, complexion, and ſenſibility, as well as in chaſtity, that chief of the female virtues; even their language, like their features, and like the ſoil they inhabit, is harſh and diſagreeable, and their pleaſures reſemble more the tranſports of fury, than the

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gentle emotions communicated by agreeable ſenſations. Upon the weſtern coaſts of Africa, are extended for a conſiderable way, a people called Zafe Ibrahims, or offspring of Abraham; they have long flowing hair, and are much fairer than any other of the Africans; but what is moſt remarkable, they are not like the reſt of their countrymen, addicted to plundering, nor to murder, being of a free, liberal, and hoſpitable ſpirit, much given to dancing and to ſongs, of which love is conſtantly the ſubject; and while in many other parts of Africa, both men and women paint in ſuch a manner as to add to their deformity, the women here paint after nature, and improve the charms ſhe has given, by ſuch colours as have the neareſt reſemblance to her in her moſt beautiful appearance: to all this we may add, that they are ſtrictly taken care of by their parents, and on that account difficult of acceſs to ſtrangers.

One peculiar cuſtom of this people, though not properly belonging to our ſubject, we cannot help mentioning: none but the chief lords of their country have the privilege of killing any animal, which they always do with a great deal of ceremony; nor would any of the people, though urged by the ſtrongeſt neceſſity, eat that which was killed by any other perſon. Another cuſtom hardly leſs ſingular is, that all children born on Tueſdays, Thurſdays, and Fridays, are reckoned accurſed, and expoſed in the woods to die of cold and hunger, or meet with a more merciful death from the jaws of the wild beaſts; but ſo compaſſionate are the women, that in ſpite of the puniſhments threatened againſt them by the men, and of the more tremendous terrors held over them by ſuperſtition, they frequently ſteal, and bring up theſe children privately at the hazard of their own lives. On the banks of the

Gambia,

Gambia, this female character is reverſed; though they put on an appearance of modeſty, it is in fact nothing but an appearance, and when opportunity offers, they will very readily grant any favour for a little coral, a ſilk handkerchief, or ſome trifle of a ſimilar nature.

BESIDES the places now mentioned, ſeveral of which we have only lame and imperfect accounts of, there are in Africa many others, of which we know little more than the names. Ethiopia, Lybia, Zanguebar, and ſome others, have hitherto been almoſt impervious to European travellers; and the only people who have dared to enter them, have been Jeſuits; whoſe relations, wherever religion or intereſt were concerned, have gained no great credit among mankind; and mercantile adventurers, ſo hot in the purſuit of gain, that they never examined any thing which had not a relation to that ſubject.

BEYOND the river Volta, in the country of Benin, and almoſt every where upon the Gold Coaſt, the women, though far from being famous for any of the virtues, would not be diſagreeable in their looks, were it not for the abominable cuſtom of marking their faces with ſcars, for the ſame purpoſes as our European ladies lay on paint. Though in few reſpects better than ſavages, there is a particular opinion over all this country, which tends to humaniſe the mind; this is a firm perſuaſion, that to whatever place they remove themſelves, or are by any accident removed, they ſhall after death return to their own country, which they conſider as the moſt delightful in the univerſe. This fond deluſive hope not only ſoftens the ſlavery to which they are often condemned in other countries, but alſo induces them to treat ſuch

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ſtrangers as come among them with much civility; being perſuaded, that they are come there to enjoy paradiſe, and receive the reward of virtuous actions done in other bodies. The people who border upon Zaara are the moſt peaceable and good-natured of the Africans; their food is ſimple, and they beſtow little labour in procuring it; they ſpend a great deal of their time in public amuſements; but neither to theſe, nor to any other places of common reſort, are the women ever admitted; aſſembled together in houſes by themſelves, they ſpend the time in female employments and amuſements, and no men are ever admitted into their ſociety. This confinement, though not of ſo ſtrict a nature as in many places of the world, has the effect that confinement generally has upon beings who ought to be free, it renders them leſs virtuous.

Reflections.

As we cannot give a minute and circumſtantial character of the African women, we ſhall conclude what we have to ſay on that ſubject, by obſerving, that when we look back upon this general and particular character we have drawn, we find the former, which, like all national characters, is drawn from the men, much worſe than the latter, which we have chiefly taken from the women; and perhaps even that former is not ſo bad as it is repreſented, being ſketched out almoſt entirely, either by declaiming prieſts of their own nation, or by Europeans, who are ſtrongly prejudiced againſt the Africans, on account of the loſſes they have ſuſtained by their plunderings and depredations. Theſe things, no doubt, juſtly excite our indignation, and extort from us every ungracious epithet; but were we to have the character of the Europeans drawn by an African, would he have more reaſon to be indulgent to us? No; he might treat us with ſtill greater ſeverity;

what a horrid ſcene would he probably paint? he would delineate a people, who profeſs a religion, the precepts of which breathe nothing but gentleneſs and humanity, in ſpite of nature, and in ſpite of that religion, carrying away by fraud and force, every year, thouſands of his helpleſs countrymen into ſlavery; he would tell how their mercileſs maſters exact from them a labour ſuperior to their ſtrength, and even ſuffer that ſtrength to fail for want of ſuſtenance; he would tell of the whips, the tortures, and the deaths inflicted on his countrymen, ſhould they ever happen to conſider themſelves as human beings, or venture to aſſert the rights of nature and of humanity!—he would tell—but we deſiſt from the diſmal tale, as we feel ourſelves almoſt transformed into Africans while we relate it.

General character of the Aſiatics.

In our progreſs from America to Africa, we meet with but little improvement in the manners and character of the people; and when from Africa we paſs into Aſia, we find that they have only left the Africans a very few degrees behind them, almoſt in every thing but peacefulneſs of diſpoſition and gentleneſs of manners. While the African, like the tyger of his foreſts, lies in wait to plunder and deſtroy; the Aſiatic, contented with a little rice, and ſome of the ſimpleſt productions of nature, reclines beneath the ſhade, and gives labour and luxury to the winds; let him but enjoy his rice, his women, and his eaſe, and he aſks no more.

The beautiful ſcenes which preſent themſelves on the banks of the Ganges, and along the plains of Hindoſtan, are almoſt beyond deſcription; the air is perfumed at ſome ſeaſons with the moſt delicious fragrance, ariſing from a variety of flowers, and no leſs a

number

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number of fruits, which yield a wholeſome and refreſhing nouriſhment. The trees form a ſhade impenetrable to the rays of the ſun: here bountiful Nature has left the Aſiatic nothing to purſue but pleaſure; and hardly any thing elſe do the Hindoos, who are the ancient inhabitants of the country, purſue. Relaxed by the climate, more than half of this pleaſure conſiſts in eaſe and indolence; which has taken ſuch hold of them, that a ſaying from one of their favourite authors is frequently in their mouths: "It is "better to ſit ſtill than to walk; better to ſleep than to awake; "but death is beſt of all." If we may credit ſome modern travellers, ſo extravagant is their love of reſt, that the women of Allahabad can hardly be prevailed upon to reach out their hands to ſave their own children, when in danger of being trod to death by carriages paſſing along the ſtreet. Such is the picture of the Hindoos. The Mahommedans have more activity, ſtronger paſſions, and a cruelty and ambition which are hardly to be reſtrained within any bounds.

Sketches of the character of their women.

In conſidering the character of the Aſiatic women, there are two things which claim our utmoſt attention. The firſt is, that the narrow and limited ſphere in which they move, almoſt entirely diveſts them of every thing that ariſes from liberty and ſociety, and conſequently of much of their characteriſtic diſtinction. The ſecond, that they are ſo cloſely ſhut up from the obſervation of all Europeans, that our accounts of them are extremely mutilated and imperfect, as well as in many points falſe and ridiculous. We may, however, obſerve of them in general, that as a ſpring bent by an external force is conſtantly endeavouring to reſtore itſelf; ſo they, unjuſtly deprived of their liberty, are conſtantly exerting

all the cunning they are maſters of, in order to deceive the tyrants who have ſecluded them from the world and the ſweets of ſociety; and by long cuſtom, aſſiſted by nature, and urged by neceſſity, they are become great adepts in thoſe arts of deception, which tend to procure them a temporary liberty, or favour an intrigue.

Chastity and unchaſtity are almoſt the only things that can characteriſe the women of the Eaſt. Shut up for ever in impenetrable Harams, they can hardly be called creatures of the world, having no intercourſe with it, and no uſe for the ſocial and œconomical virtues which adorn its citizens. If being good wives conſiſts in care, frugality and induſtry, theſe are all things entirely out of their power: if being ſuch, conſiſts in loving their huſbands, and tenderneſs to their children; the firſt of theſe is alſo rendered next to impoſſible by the behaviour of thoſe tyrants who ſtyle themſelves huſbands; and the laſt is much weakened by transferring upon the children ſome part of that diſlike they have to the father. To the joys of friendſhip they are, perhaps, entire ſtrangers: the men treat them in ſuch a manner, that it is impoſſible they can eſteem them; the women are their conſtant rivals. The only virtues, then, which the Aſiatic fair can put in practice, are ſuch as relate to their religion, and their chaſtity; but even in the exerciſe of religion they are circumſcribed. As they are not allowed to attend on the public worſhip of the gods of their country, they can have no other religion than the ſilent adoration of the heart; and as to chaſtity, the manner in which they are diſpoſed of to, or forcibly taken by huſbands, and the behaviour of theſe huſbands to them through life, are the moſt unlikely methods in the world to make them famous for that virtue.

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Braminical women, their conduct.

BUT though theſe obſervations may be pretty generally applied to the Aſiatic women, there are ſome exceptions. The Bramins, or prieſts of India, though they confine their women like the reſt of their countrymen, yet, by treating them with lenity and indulgence, they ſecure their virtue by attaching their hearts. Married to each other in their infancy, they have the greateſt veneration for the nuptial tie: their mutual fondneſs increaſes with their ſtrength; and in riper years, all the glory of the women conſiſts in pleaſing their huſbands; a duty which they conſider as one of the moſt ſacred of their holy religion, and which the gods will not ſuffer them to neglect with impunity. While the reſt of the Hindoo women take every opportunity to elude their keepers, theſe voluntarily confine themſelves, at leaſt from the company and converſation of all ſtrangers, and in every reſpect copy that ſimplicity of life and manners, for which their huſbands are ſo remarkable.

Modeſty of the Chineſe women.

IF we except theſe we have now mentioned, of all the other Aſiatics the Chineſe have perhaps the beſt title to modeſty. Even the men wrap themſelves cloſely up in their garments, and reckon it indecent to diſcover any more of their arms and legs than is neceſſary: the women, ſtill more cloſely wrapped up, never diſcover a naked hand even to their neareſt relations, if they can poſſibly avoid it. Every part of their dreſs, every part of their behaviour, is calculated to preſerve decency, and inſpire reſpect; and what adds the greateſt luſtre to their charms, is that uncommon modeſty which appears in every look, and in every action. Charmed, no doubt, with ſo engaging a demeanour, the men behave to them in a reciprocal manner; and that their virtue may not

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not be contaminated by the neighbourhood of vice, the legiſlature takes care that no proſtitutes ſhall lodge within the walls of any of the great towns in China. Such are the Chineſe women repreſented by ſome travellers; but it is by others doubted, whether this ſemblance of modeſty be any thing elſe than the cuſtom of the country; and alleged, that notwithſtanding of ſo much ſeeming decency and decorum, they have their peculiar modes of intriguing, and embrace every poſſible opportunity of putting them in practice; and that, in theſe intrigues, they frequently ſcruple not to ſtab the paramour they had invited to their arms, as the ſureſt method of preventing detection and loſs of character. A few, perhaps, of the moſt flagitious may be guilty of ſuch enormous crimes; but we perſuade ourſelves, that they are only very few; and we are happy in having it in our power to inform our fair readers, that ſuch relations are not to be found in any of our modern travellers, whoſe veracity is moſt to be relied on.

Of the Fakiers.

So different over all the world are the ſects of ſaints, as well as of ſinners, that beſides the Bramins, a ſet of innocent and religious prieſts, who have rendered their women virtuous by treating them with kindneſs and humanity, there are another ſect of religio-philoſophical drones, called Fakiers, who contribute as much as they can to debauch the ſex, under a pretence of ſuperior ſanctity. Theſe hypocritical ſaints, like ſome of the ridiculous ſects which formerly exiſted in Europe, wear no clothes; conſidering them only as proper appendages to ſinners, who are aſhamed, becauſe they are ſenſible of guilt; while they, being free from every ſtain of pollution, have no ſhame to cover. In this original ſtate of nature, theſe idle and pretended devotees, aſſemble together ſometimes in armies of ten or twelve thouſand, and under a

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pretence of going in pilgrimage to certain temples, like locuſts devour every thing on their way; the men flying before them, and carrying all that they can out of the reach of their depredations; while the women, not in the leaſt afraid of a naked army of luſty faints, throw themſelves in their way, or remain quietly at home to receive them.

It has long been an opinion, well eſtabliſhed all over India, that there is not in nature ſo powerful a remedy for removing the ſterility of women, as the prayers of theſe ſturdy naked ſaints. On this account, barren women conſtantly apply to them for aſſiſtance; which when the good-natured Fakier has an inclination to grant, he leaves his ſlipper, or his ſtaff, at the door of the lady's apartment with whom he is praying; a ſymbol ſo ſacred, that it effectually prevents any one from violating the ſecrecy of their devotion: but, ſhould he forget this ſignal, and at the ſame time be diſtant from the protection of his brethren, a ſound drubbing is frequently the reward of his pious endeavours. But though they will venture ſometimes, in Hindoſtan, to treat a Fakier in this unholy manner; in other parts of Aſia and Africa, ſuch is the veneration in which theſe luſty ſaints are held, that they not only have acceſs when they pleaſe, to perform private devotions with barren women, but are accounted ſo holy, that they may at any time, in public or in private, confer a perſonal favour upon a woman, without bringing upon her either ſhame or guilt; and no woman dare refuſe to gratify their paſſion. Nor, indeed, has any one an inclination of this kind; becauſe ſhe, upon whom this perſonal favour has been conferred, is conſidered by herſelf, and by all the people, as having been ſanctified and made more holy by the action.

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So much concerning the conduct of the Fakiers, in debauching women, ſeems certain. But it is by ſome travellers further related, that wherever they find a woman who is exceedingly handſome, they carry her off privately to one of their temples; but in ſuch a manner, as to make her and the people believe, that ſhe was carried away by the god who is there worſhipped; who, being violently in love with her, took that method to procure her for his wife. This done, they perform a nuptial ceremony, and make her further believe, that ſhe is married to the god; when, in reality, ſhe is only married to one of the Fakiers who perſonates him. Women who are treated in this manner are revered by the people as the wives of the gods, and by that ſtratagem ſecured ſolely to the Fakiers, who have cunning enough to impoſe themſelves as gods upon ſome of theſe women, through the whole of their lives. In countries where reaſon is ſtronger than ſuperſtition, we almoſt think this impoſſible: where the contrary is the caſe, there is nothing too hard to be credited. Something like this was done by the prieſts of ancient Greece and Rome; and a few centuries ago, tricks of the ſame nature were practiſed by the monks, and other libertines, upon ſome of the viſionary and enthuſiaſtic women of Europe. Hence we need not think it ſtrange, if the Fakiers generally ſucceed in attempts of this nature; when we conſider, that they only have to deceive a people brought up in the moſt conſummate ignorance; and that nothing can be a more flattering diſtinction to female vanity, than for a woman to ſuppoſe herſelf ſuch a peculiar favourite of the divinity ſhe worſhips, as to be choſen, from all her companions, to the honour of being admitted to his embraces; a favour, which her ſelf-admiration will diſpoſe her more readily to believe than examine.

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Religion made ſubſervient to proſtitution.

BESIDES this method of decoying women into the temples, for the ſake of debauchery, there are other temples, where they are ſupplied with them in a more open manner; being voluntarily offered by their parents, and dedicated by the prieſts while infants, with great pomp and ſolemnity, to the ſervice of their gods; they dance and ſing before the chief idol on ſolemn feſtivals, with all the wantonneſs of venal charms, and temptation of looſe attire, in order to attract the ſpectators, to whom they afterwards proſtitute themſelves for the benefit of the temple to which they belong; and at the expence of which they were brought up. When ſuch is the religion of the Eaſt, when ſuch are the deities there worſhipped, can we expect chaſtity to be a virtue much regarded among the women, or that the men can ſecure it by any other methods than locks, bars, and eunuchs?

BUT it is not the religion of the Hindoos only, that is unfavourable to chaſtity; that of Mahomet, which now prevails over a great part of India, is unfavourable to it likewiſe. Mahomediſm every where indulges the men with a plurality of wives, while it ties down the women to the ſtricteſt conjugal fidelity; hence, while the men riot in unlimited variety, the women are in great numbers confined to ſhare among them the ſcanty favours of one man only. This unnatural and impolitic conduct induces them to ſeek by art and intrigue, what they are denied by the laws of their prophet. As polygamy prevails over all Aſia, this art and intrigue follow as the conſequence of it; ſome have imagined, that it is the reſult of climate, but it rather appears to be the reſult of the injuſtice which women ſuffer by polygamy; for it ſeems to reign as much in Conſtantinople, and in every other place

place where polygamy is in faſhion, as it does on the banks of the Ganges, or the Indus. The famous Monteſquieu, whoſe ſyſtem was, that the paſſions are entirely regulated by the climate, brings as a proof of this ſyſtem, a ſtory from the collection of voyages for the eſtabliſhment of an Eaſt India Company, in which it is ſaid, that at Patan, "the wanton deſires of the women are "ſo outrageous, that the men are obliged to make uſe of a certain "apparel to ſhelter them from their deſigns." Were this ſtory really true, it would be but a partial proof of the effect of climate, for why ſhould the burning ſuns of Patan only influence the paſſions of the fair? Why ſhould they there tranſport that ſex beyond decency, which in all other climates is the moſt decent? and leave in ſo cool and defenſive a ſtate, that ſex, which in all other climates is apt to be the moſt offenſive and indecent? To whatever length the ſpirit of intrigue may be carried in Aſia and Africa, however the paſſions of the women may prompt them to excite deſire, and to throw themſelves in the way of gratification, we have the ſtrongeſt reaſons to reprobate all theſe ſtories, which would make us believe, that they are ſo loſt to decency as to attack the other ſex; ſuch a ſyſtem would be overturning nature, and inverting the eſtabliſhed laws by which ſhe governs the world.

Women of Otaheite.

In Otaheite, an iſland lately diſcovered in the great Southern Ocean, we are preſented with women of a ſingular character. As far as we can recollect, we think it is a pretty general rule, that wherever the ſex are accuſtomed to be conſtantly clothed, they are aſhamed to appear naked: thoſe of Otaheite ſeem however to be an exception to this rule; to ſhew themſelves in public, with

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with or without clothing, appears to be to them a matter of equal indifference, and the expoſition of any part of their bodies, is not attended with the leaſt backwardneſs or reluctance; circumſtances from which we may reaſonably infer, that, among them, clothes were not originally invented to cover ſhame, but either as ornaments, or as a defence againſt the cold. But a ſtill more ſtriking ſingularity in the character of theſe women, and which diſtinguiſhes them not only from the females of all other nations, but likewiſe from thoſe of almoſt all other animals, is, their performing in public thoſe rites, which in every other part of the globe, and almoſt among all animals, are performed in privacy and retirement: whether this is the effect of innocence, or of a diſſoluteneſs of manners to which no other people have yet arrived, remains ſtill to be diſcovered; that they are diſſolute, even beyond any thing we have hitherto recorded, is but too certain. As polygamy is not allowed among them, to ſatisfy the luſt of variety, they have a ſociety called Arreoy, in which every woman is common to every man; and when any of theſe women happens to have a child, it is ſmothered in the moment of its birth, that it may not interrupt the pleaſures of its infamous mother; but in this juncture, ſhould nature relent at ſo horrid a deed, even then the mother is not allowed to ſave her child, unleſs ſhe can find a man who will patroniſe it as a father; in which caſe, the man is conſidered as having appropriated the woman to himſelf, and ſhe is accordingly extruded from this hopeful ſociety. Theſe few anecdotes ſufficiently characteriſe the women of this iſland. In ſome of the adjacent ones, which were viſited by his Majeſty's ſhips upon this diſcovery, if the women were not leſs unchaſte, they were at leaſt leſs flagitious and indelicate.

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Turkiſh ladies, their character.

As the Turks, who now inhabit a part of Europe, were originally Aſiatics, and ſtill retain the manners and cuſtoms which they brought from that country, their women are much given to ſecret gallantry and intrigue; vices which ſeem however to be the worſt part of their character: when we view them in the other departments of female life, we ſee many amiable qualities conſpiring to adorn them, ſuch as benevolence, charity, and a tenderneſs of feeling, and ſoftneſs of diſpoſition, to which they have hardly ever reached in the moſt poliſhed parts of the Chriſtian world. In Lady Montague's deſcription of the viſit ſhe made to the lady of the Grand Vizer of Conſtantinople, her humility, meekneſs, and charity, are delineated in a manner which does honour to the ſex. In her viſit to the fair Fatima, while we find the perſon of an angel, engaged in all the tender offices of a mother, we muſt be inſenſible to every feeling, if our hearts do not glow with the deſcription. We are indeed but too apt to throw a veil over every virtue which appears in a people profeſſing a religion ſo different from our own, and which we have always been taught to conſider with partiality, and to look upon with horror; than which, nothing can more certainly indicate weakneſs of mind and want of urbanity. People of all religions have in them a mixture of vice and virtue; and, on a ſtrict enquiry, we ſhall find, that vice oftener flows from a bad education and improper cuſtoms, than from a bad religion: but ſhould the Mahometans, or any other people, with a religion leſs pure and holy than that of the Chriſtians, be found to excel them in many of the moral virtues, they certainly on that account deſerve the more praiſe, and we the more reprehenſion; eſpecially when it is conſidered what they would probably have done, had they been in our ſituation.

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Reflections on the conduct of the Europeans.

WHEN we take a retroſpective view of theſe imperfect ſketches of the character of the American, African, and Aſiatic women, when we ſee almoſt the whole of it compriſed in unremitted endeavours to ſatisfy a voluptuous appetite, when we ſee the ſex every where abuſed by ſlavery or confinement, we cannot help breathing a wiſh, that both the one and the other were rectified; and from the intercourſe that has long ſubſiſted between Europe and many of the countries we have been conſidering, ſome amendment in the condition, and reformation in the manners of the women might reaſonably have been expected. But the Europeans who have gone abroad, inſtead of carrying along with them that ſpirit of moral rectitude, taught by the religion of Jeſus, which ought to have demonſtrated their ſuperior virtue as well as ſuperior knowledge, ſeem in general, the moment they left their own country, to have thrown aſide every principle, and every idea, but that of amaſſing wealth, though at the expence of probity, and of conſcience; and inſtead of introducing more order and regularity among the ignorant people they viſited, have but too often given a looſe to every voluptuous appetite, and outdone in every ſpecies of debauchery, thoſe who were neither reſtrained by their laws, nor their religion; nor has this flagitious conduct been peculiar to one European nation only, all thoſe who have planted colonies, and extended their commerce, have been almoſt equally infamous for cruelty, oppreſſion, and debauchery.

SOON after the Portugueſe had conquered India, laying aſide that martial ſpirit for which they were then ſo famous, they gave themſelves up to all thoſe exceſſes which render the human race odious, and became ſuch monſters, that poiſon, conflagration, and aſſaſſination, with every other crime, grew familiar to them.

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They maſſacred the natives; they deſtroyed one another; and while they raiſed the hatred of theſe natives, they loſt the courage to make themſelves feared. In the iſland of Amboyna, a Portugueſe had, at a public feſtival, ſeized upon a beautiful woman, and regardleſs of decency, proceeded to offer her the greateſt outrage. One of the iſlanders, highly reſenting ſuch a conduct, firſt armed his fellow-citizens, and afterward calling together the Portugueſe, addreſſed them in the following manner: "To revenge "affronts of ſo cruel a nature as theſe we have received from "you, would require actions, not words; yet we will ſpeak to "you. You preach to us a Deity, who delights, you ſay, in ge"nerous actions; but theft, murder, obſcenity, and drunkenneſs, "are your common practices. Your hearts are inflamed with "every vice; our manners can never agree with yours. Nature "foreſaw this, when ſhe ſeparated us by immenſe oceans, but "ye have overleaped her barriers: this audacity, of which you "are not aſhamed to boaſt, is a proof of the corruption of your "hearts. Take my advice, leave to their repoſe theſe nations "that reſemble you ſo little: go, fix your habitations among thoſe "who are brutal as yourſelves. An intercourſe with you would "be more fatal to us, than all the evils which it is in the power "of your god to inflict upon us. We renounce your alliance for"ever. Your arms are ſuperior to ours, but we are more juſt than "you, and we do not fear you; the Iſlands are from this day your "enemies, fly from their country, and beware how you approach "it any more."

Such were the ſentiments of one whom we call a ſavage, on the behaviour of the Portugueſe. When a governor of ſenſe and humanity happened to preſide over their colonies, he endeavoured

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to reform the manners, and reſtrain the rapacity, of his countrymen; but his ſingle virtue was always feeble and unavailing, when oppoſed to the vices of a contaminated people. The Spaniards, who in many places ſucceeded them, not only copied, but even in time fairly exceeded, the original example. Few of our readers can be ſtrangers to the cruelties and debaucheries they committed in Mexico and Peru, where they built churches, endeavoured to explain the myſteries of the Chriſtian religion to the natives, in a language of which they did not underſtand one word; and afterward piouſly ſlaughtered them as heretics, for not believing what had been ſo clearly demonſtrated to them. When they had conquered the iſland of Hiſpaniola, they made peace with the natives, on condition that they ſhould cultivate all the land for their uſe, and furniſh them with a certain quantity of gold every month. The poor wretches, finding the taſk inſupportable, as well as impoſſible, took ſhelter in their mountains, where they hoped to maintain themſelves till the Spaniards ſhould be obliged by famine to evacuate their iſland. But the Spaniards, in the mean time receiving a ſupply of proviſions from Europe, purſued them to their faſtneſſes; to revenge, as they ſaid, the injuſtice they had ſuffered; trained their dogs to hunt and deſtroy them, in places which to themſelves were inacceſſible; and, fired with ſuperſtition and a thirſt of blood, ſome of them made a vow to deſtroy twelve Indians every day, in honour of the twelve Apoſtles. What uneaſineſs would it have given to men ſo mild and benevolent, had they thought that their names would have been proſtituted to ſuch infamous purpoſes!

HUMANITY recoils at this diſmal recital, and ſincerely wiſhes, that the other powers who have uſurped a right in the Indies could

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be abſolved from ſimilar crimes; but the immenſe plunder lately brought to England from the plains of Hindoſtan and banks of the Ganges, are but too evident proofs of what our countrymen have there committed. Such loads of treaſure are not the produce of the paths of peace, nor even of the fields ſtained with blood, and diſfigured by the horrors of war; unleſs that war, like a deluge, indiſcriminately levels friend and enemy as it goes along. Avarice, ſordid avarice, ſeems alone to have occupied the breaſts of the greateſt part of theſe who have travelled from Europe to the Indies; and from ſo fruitful a ſource has ſprung up almoſt every other crime. An Engliſhman who was ſhipwrecked on the coaſt of Africa, being taken and condemned to death by the natives, was ſaved by a woman of ſome diſtinction in the country; who, on a promiſe that he would marry her, contrived to eſcape along with him. The wretch had no ſooner arrived in an European ſettlement, than he ſold his deliverer for a ſlave, and abandoned her for ever. But the vices are not ſolely attached to the men who have left Europe in purſuit of gain: even the women who have accompanied them, leaving behind them the gentleneſs of European manners and of female nature, have been often hardly leſs diſtinguiſhed for debauchery and cruelty than the men. A virago of this ſort in the Eaſt or Weſt-Indies, ſeldom meeting with any oppoſition to her whim and caprice, aſſumes at laſt a ſpirit of preſumption and tyranny; and loſt to feeling and humanity, wields the whip with ſuch dexterity, as to fetch at every ſtroke blood from the back of the naked and unreſiſting ſlave; whoſe only fault was, that he did not anticipate the wiſhes of his miſtreſs, or becauſe he let fall ſome hints, that he was a creature of the ſame genus as herſelf.

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The ſame Subject continued.

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AFTER having traced the character of the fair ſex through ſo many countries, where we have found the vicious and the diſagreeable too frequently to be predominant; we now with the utmoſt pleaſure turn towards Europe, where the beauties of their character, like thoſe of their perſons, will not only engage our attention, but alſo attract our hearts. We cannot, however, extend our plan ſo far as to hold up to view every beauty and every blemiſh, which gives a luſtre or a deformity to the fair, through all the different countries of Europe; we ſhall therefore only endeavour to draw the outlines of characters, too various and complicated for us to finiſh with any tolerable degree of preciſion.

General ſketch of the character of European women.

We have already obſerved, that chaſtity has, in all poliſhed nations, been ever eſteemed the principal ornament of the female character; and we now aver, that this was never more remarkably the caſe, in any part of the world, than at preſent in Europe. Here we worſhip no deities that delight in debauchery, as among the ancients; nor ſuch as, regardleſs of moral good and evil, concern not themſelves about human actions, as in ſome parts of the world, among the moderns. Hence the conduct of our women, beſides being influenced by the ſuperior regard paid to chaſtity among us, is ſtill further influenced by a veneration for that purity of

of manners and of character, ſo ſtrongly inculcated by the precepts of the Chriſtian religion; and hence, though declaimers and ſatiriſts in every nation of Europe paint their own women as the moſt lewd and abandoned in the world, we boldly affirm, that Europe in general is more famous for the chaſtity and other good qualities of its women, than any other part of the globe; for the truth of which we need only appeal to the perſonal experience of the traveller, and to the reading of the hiſtorian; both of which afford an ample demonſtration of our aſſertion. We muſt, however, obſerve here, that the virtues of modeſty and chaſtity do not flouriſh moſt, where they are endeavoured to be forced upon the women by locks, bolts, and gouvernantes, as in Spain; nor where unreſtrained liberty and politeneſs are carried to the greateſt length, as in France and Italy; but rather, where, with no other curb on their perſonal freedom than what decency requires, they have not carried the refinements of politeneſs to ſuch an exceſs, as to reckon every reſtraint upon inclination a mark of ruſtication and ill-breeding.

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In endeavouring to ſketch ſome rude draughts of the character of the European women, we ſhall take a view of them as they appear in the principal nations of which it is compoſed; and as the French reckon themſelves of all other people the moſt conſpicuous, we ſhall begin with them; a diſtinction to which we reckon them juſtly entitled, as they are the fruitful ſource of half the faſhions that embelliſh, and perhaps of more than half the foibles that diſgrace, Europe.

Of the French women.

As chaſtity is a virtue which does not ſeem to flouriſh in a ſoil, where too much or too little culture is beſtowed upon it, we muſt not

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not expect to find it remarkably vigorous among the French, where politeneſs is the firſt of all the virtues, and where chaſtity would hardly be entitled to a place as the ſecond. When travellers, who have always been accuſtomed to countries where women are much on the reſerve, enter France, where the very reverſe in almoſt every particular is the caſe; before they have coolly conſidered the cuſtoms of different countries, they are apt to conclude that the French have no decency and no chaſtity among them. Such concluſions are, however, by much too haſty: we muſt not be led by appearances: a French woman of the moſt unblemiſhed reputation will, in compliance with the cuſtoms of her country, act with a levity and freedom, both of words and actions, which in England would be almoſt an infallible indication of a ſtrumpet; while in France it only indicates, that a woman has ſeen the world. We would not, however, inſinuate from this, that chaſtity is among the French a prevailing virtue: the number of miſtreſſes kept by the married as well as the ſingle; the little diſcredit thrown on the profeſſion of a proſtitute, eſpecially if ſhe is an Opera girl, are proofs of this; and we may add, the general deſire of intrigue among the women, and the little notice taken of it by the men; both of which have at length eſtabliſhed it as a faſhion; and in France, not to be faſhionable, is a condition much more dreaded, than not to be virtuous.

In every country in the world, women have always a little to do, and a great deal to ſay. In France, notwithſtanding of the Salique law, they dictate almoſt every thing that is ſaid, and direct every thing that is done: they are the moſt reſtleſs ſet of beings in the world; ever in the hurry of action, either about their own affairs, or thoſe of other people; and equally buſy and ſolicitous about

about ſettling the affairs of the nation, or ſticking a pin in its proper place: to fold her hands in idleneſs and impoſe ſilence on her tongue, would be to a French-woman worſe than death; the ſole joy of her life is to be engaged in the proſecution of ſome ſcheme, the more intricate and arduous the better; and ſo much the better ſtill, if faſhion, ambition, or love be the ſubject. Nor is their activity confined to the gay and the pleaſant, they even enter ſometimes into the moſt ſerious and momentous concerns of life; the profoundeſt depths of politics are not hid from them, and the moſt ſolemn councils have often been ſummoned, and affairs of the utmoſt conſequence debated, when the deciſion had been previouſly ſettled by their addreſs and artifices. Among the rich and opulent, they are entirely the votaries of pleaſure, which they purſue through all her labyrinths, at the expence of fortune, reputation, and health. Giddy and extravagant to the laſt degree, they leave to their huſbands œconomy and care, which would only ſpoil their complexions, and furrow their brows. When we deſcend to tradeſmen and mechanics, the caſe is reverſed; the wife manages every thing in the houſe and ſhop, while the huſband lounges in the back-ſhop an idle ſpectator, or ſtruts about in his ſword and bag-wig.

Matrimony is in France a thing entirely different from what it is in all other parts of Europe; it does not there ſubject the helpleſs female to obedience, to duty, or even to fidelity, but gives her a right to an unbounded liberty and the fortune of her huſband, while it confers on the huſband hardly any right but that of calling her his wife. In faſhionable life, and indeed among all ranks, as all aſpire at being faſhionable, it ſeems to be a bargain entered into by a male and female to bear the ſame name, live in the ſame houſe, and purſue their ſeparate pleaſures without

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without reſtraint or controul: and ſo religiouſly is this part of the bargain kept, that both parties ſhape their courſe exactly as convenience or inclination may dictate, ſpurning the joys of friendſhip at home, and contemning the cenſure of the world abroad; they live in the ſame houſe, but ſeldom ſee each other, having different apartments, different ſets of acquaintance, different ſervants, a different equipage, and different tables. Jealouſy is not to be expected here, it is a monſter which ſprings from love; but as a French couple come together without love, they live without jealouſy, and commonly jog through life together, enjoying but little happineſs, and feeling perhaps no miſery on account of each other.

Learning of the French women.

In the midſt of every levity and faſhionable folly, there is no part of the world where literature is more cultivated by the fair ſex than in France, nor any part where the company of men of letters is by them more coveted; a circumſtance, which, while it diffuſes knowledge among the women, gives an elegance and cheerfulneſs to the men, and renders them men of the world as well as of letters; and a circumſtance, which has taught many of the French-women the valuable ſecret of reconciling pleaſure to improvement: but a ſecret ſo valuable, and ſo rare in the female world, is not entirely owing to this circumſtance, education alſo has a ſhare in it; brought up for the moſt part in convents, books are often the only means they have of beguiling the tedious hours of inactivity and ſilence, and a fondneſs for them once contracted, the habit frequently remains for life. Such is female influence over literature, as well as over every other thing in France, that by much the greateſt part of the productions of the preſs are calculated for their capacity; and happy is the author

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author who meets with their general approbation, it is the ladder by which he muſt climb to fame, and the fountain which will aſſuredly yield him profit.

Eaſe and gaiety of the French women.

It is the property of real and unaffected politeneſs to baniſh all the ſtiffneſs, and throw aſide thoſe airs of reſerve, which in every country appear more conſpicuous as the inhabitants approach more towards barbariſm; in no country does this politeneſs manifeſt itſelf more than in France, where the company of the women is acceſſible to every man who can recommend himſelf by his dreſs, and by his addreſs. To affectation and prudery the French women are equally ſtrangers; eaſy and unaffected in their perſons and manners, their politeneſs has ſo much the appearance of nature, that one would almoſt believe no part of it to be the effect of art. An air of ſprightlineſs and gaiety ſits perpetually on their countenances, and their whole deportment ſeems to indicate, that their only buſineſs is to ſtrew the path of life with flowers. Perſuaſion hangs on their lips, and though their volubility of tongue is indefatigable, ſo ſoft is their accent, ſo lively their expreſſion, ſo various their attitudes, that they fix the attention for hours together on a tale of nothing. In ſhort, if a man is not too far gone in the ſpleen, there is no cure ſo certain as the company of a lively French-woman; but if he is totally overrun with that diſeaſe, her company will augment every ſymptom, and he will paint her as a late ſnarling traveller did, all folly and impertinence.

Their levity.

The peculiar province of beauty is to captivate at the firſt ſight, and to retain the captive in chains, only for the ſhort time that is neceſſary to diſcover they were forged by beauty alone. The

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French-women in general, not being remarkable for beauty, ſeldom jump into the affections of a man all at once, but gain upon him by degrees, and practiſe every female art to retain him in their ſervice as long as inclination or convenience ſhall dictate; but the wind, or the faſhions which ſhe follows, are hardly more inconſtant than a French lady's mind; her ſole joy is in the number of her admirers, and her ſole pride in changing them as often as poſſible; over the whole of them ſhe exerciſes the moſt abſolute power, and they are zealouſly attentive even to prevent her wiſhes, by performing whatever they think ſhe has any inclination to, their time, their intereſt, and activity, become wholly devoted to her will, or rather to her caprice, and they muſt not preſume to exempt any talent or power from the moſt ſlaviſh ſervitude to her pleaſure; even the purſe, that moſt inacceſſible thing about a Frenchman, muſt pour out its laſt ſous, at the call of his miſtreſs; and ſhould he fail in this particular, he would be immediately diſcarded from her train, with a ſtigma of preferring Mercury to Venus, which would effectually prevent him from ever gaining admittance into the train of any other of the fair; a mortification which being exceedingly unfaſhionable, would to a Frenchman be almoſt intolerable.

THE French-women reckon themſelves the only females in the world who can dreſs with elegance, and behave with genuine and unaffected eaſe, notions which are diffuſed ſo much over all Europe, that theſe women lead every faſhion, and dictate to every people the manner of behaviour; hence they have contracted a national pride, which is apt to make them look down on the inhabitants of every other country as miſerable beings, but a few degrees above ſavage barbarity. Such abſolute votaries of plea-

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ſure, they have but little time for any other purſuit, even religion muſt give place to this darling paſſion; while a French-woman is able to drink at the ſtream of pleaſure, ſhe is generally an atheiſt; as her taſte for that diminiſhes, ſhe becomes gradually religious, and when ſhe has loſt it altogether, is the moſt bigotted devotee. Maternal affection muſt not interrupt the buſineſs of pleaſure. Few women in France, who can afford to do otherwiſe, nurſe, or take much care of their children when young; but for this neglect they make ſome reparation, by ſolicitouſly uſing all their intereſt to provide for them when they become capable of entering into the army or the church. But to conclude, on comparing the different accounts of the French females with each other, we are of opinion, that they rather ſacrifice too much of their delicacy to wit, and of their chaſtity to good-breeding; that they pay too little regard to character, and too much to a ridiculous opinion, that faſhionable people are above it; that in fine, they are too much the creatures of art, and have almoſt diſcarded nature as much from their feelings as from their faces.

Of the Italian women.

IF chaſtity is none of the moſt ſhining virtues of the French, it is ſtill leſs ſo of the Italians. Almoſt all the travellers who have viſited Italy, agree in deſcribing it as the moſt abandoned of all the countries of Europe. At Venice, at Naples, and indeed in almoſt every part of Italy, women are taught from their infancy, the various arts of alluring to their arms the young and unwary, and of obtaining from them, while heated by love or wine, every thing that flattery and falſe ſmiles can obtain in theſe unguarded moments; and ſo little infamous is the trade of proſtitution, and ſo venal the women, that hardly any rank or

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condition ſets them above being bribed to it, nay they are even frequently aſſiſted by their male friends and acquaintances to drive a good bargain; nor does their career of debauchery finiſh with their unmarried ſtate: the vows of fidelity which they make at the altar, are like the vows and oaths made upon too many other occaſions, only conſidered as nugatory forms, which law has obliged them to take, but cuſtom abſolved them from performing. They even claim and enjoy greater liberties after marriage than before; every married woman has a ciciſbio, or gallant, who attends her to all public places, hands her in and out of her carriage, picks up her gloves or fan, and a thouſand other little offices of the ſame nature; but this is only his public employment, as a reward for which, he is entitled to have the lady as often as he pleaſes at a place of retirement ſacred to themſelves, where no perſon, not even the moſt intruſive huſband muſt enter, to be witneſs of what paſſes between them. This has been conſidered by people of all other nations, as a cuſtom not altogether conſiſtent with chaſtity and purity of manners; the Italians themſelves, however, endeavour to juſtify it in their converſations with ſtrangers, and Baretti has of late years publiſhed a formal vindication of it to the world. In this vindication he has not only deduced the original of it from pure Platonic love, but would willingly perſuade us that it is ſtill continued upon the ſame mental principles; a doctrine which the world will hardly be credulous enough to ſwallow, even though he ſhould offer more convincing arguments to ſupport it than he has already done.

If the French women are remarkable for a national pride, which induces them to look with a mixture of pity and contempt upon every

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every female who is unfortunate enough to belong to any other country, the Italians are not leſs remarkable for a family pride, which inſtigates them to deſpiſe, as beings beneath their notice, every one who cannot reckon up a long line of illuſtrious anceſtors; and indeed they often behave as if they were perſuaded, that a deſcent of this kind conferred upon them a dignity and worth, which all their own worthleſs inſignificance could not poſſibly ſtain or deſtroy. The Spaniards carry this family pride even farther than the Italians, and the Germans, perhaps, ſtill farther than they. It is a remainder of Gothic barbarity, wherever we meet with it, and one of the moſt certain appendages of narrow and little minds. Viewing it in this light, ſome have confined it almoſt entirely to the female ſex: but its limits are not ſo circumſcribed; in almoſt every country, it diffuſes itſelf in a greater or leſs degree even among the men; but it reigns triumphant in the ideas of the women, ſupplies the want of perſonal merit, and too often betrays itſelf in every look and in every action of their lives. In other reſpects the women of Italy approach nearer to the French, than thoſe of any of the European kingdoms; they are not quite ſo gay and volatile, nor do they ſo much excite the organs of riſibility; but by the ſoftneſs of their language, and their manner, they more forcibly engage the heart: they are not ſo much the cameleon or the weathercock, but have ſome decent degree of permanency in their connections, whether of love or friendſhip; not, like the French, careleſs and diveſted of jealouſy, but often ſuffering it to tranſport them to the moſt unwarrantable actions.

Spaniſh women, their character.

As we have almoſt in every other particular characteriſed the women of Italy, in our ſketches of thoſe of France, we ſhall now paſs

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paſs on to Spain; a country which, though almoſt in our neighbourhood, we are leſs acquainted with, and leſs able to give the proper character of its inhabitants, than of the Hottentots, or Indians on the banks of the Ganges; a circumſtance owing to the Spaniards having formerly almoſt totally ſhut up their country from the intruſion of ſtrangers; and from the genius of ſome of the moſt modern travellers, who, in paſſing through it, have hardly deigned to take notice of any thing that was not ſtamped at leaſt with the ruſt of a thouſand years. From the little, however, which we learn of the travellers who have viſited Spain, that people have no great reaſon to boaſt of the ſecurity in which they ſuppoſe they have placed the chaſtity of their women, by the aſſiſtance of locks, bars, and old duennas. Chaſtity cannot be properly ſecured but by virtue, and virtue never yet was inſtilled by force. The Spaniards have at laſt attained ſenſibility enough to ſee this: their locks and bars are falling into diſuſe, and their women do not become leſs chaſte; and whatever may be the conduct of particulars, when we view them as a nation, they rank much higher in this reſpect than either the French or Italians, though not ſo high as ſome of the other nations of Europe. A Spaniſh lady of rank diſcourſing with ſome of her countrymen on gallantry, ſaid, that ſhe would heartily deſpiſe the man, who, having a proper opportunity, did not ſtrenuouſly ſolicit every favour ſhe could grant. Every Spaniſh woman reckons this a tribute due to her charms; and though ſhe has no inclination to grant all the favours that a man can aſk of her, ſhe is not the leſs affronted if he does not aſk them.

THERE is in the Spaniards a native dignity and pride, which far ſurpaſſes that of any other nation; which, though the ſource

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of many inconveniencies, has nevertheleſs this ſalutary effect, that it ſets them above almoſt every ſpecies of meanneſs and infidelity. Nor is this a quality peculiar to the men; it diffuſes itſelf in a great meaſure among the women alſo; and its effects are viſible, both in their conſtancy in love and in friendſhip, in which reſpects they are the very reverſe of the French women. Their affections are not to be gained by a bit of ſparkling lace, or a tawdry ſet of liveries; nor are they to be loſt by the appearance of ſtill finer. Their deportment is rather grave and reſerved; and, on the whole, they have much more of the prude than the coquette in their compoſition. Being more confined at home, and leſs engaged in buſineſs and in pleaſure, they take more care of their offspring than the French, and have a becoming tenderneſs in their diſpoſition to every thing but heretics.

The Spaniards are indulgent almoſt beyond meaſure to their women, and there are ſeveral ſituations in which they take every advantage of this indulgence. A kept miſtreſs has, by indiſputable cuſtom, a right to a new ſuit of clothes, according to the quality of her keeper, as often as ſhe is blooded; and it is only feigning a ſlight illneſs, and being on a proper footing with the Doctor, to procure this as often as ſhe pleaſes. A lady to whom a Cavallero pays his addreſſes, is ſole miſtreſs of his time and money; and ſhould he refuſe her any requeſt, reaſonable or capricious, it would reflect eternal diſhonour upon him among the men, and not only ruin his ſuit, but make him the deteſtation of all the women. But in no ſituation does their character appear ſo whimſical, or their power ſo conſpicuous, as when they are breeding. In this caſe, whatever they long for, whatever they aſk, or whatever they have an inclination to do, they muſt be indulged in. Some even of the

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loweſt ſtation have taken it into their heads to ſee the king, have ſent to him, and he has gratified their curioſity. But this whimſical indulgence is ſometimes uſed improperly; for it has been known, that young men who could not gain admittance to the wives of others, whom they wanted to debauch, have dreſſed themſelves like women with child, and in this diſguiſe carried on their intrigues unſuſpected.

General obſervations on the European women.

It would greatly exceed the limits we have preſcribed to ourſelves, were we to give a minute detail of the character and conduct of the women in every country of Europe; we ſhall therefore confine our ſubject to a few obſervations of a more general nature than thoſe we have juſt now exhibited. Though the Germans are rather a dull and phlegmatic people, and not much addicted to the warmer paſſions, yet at the court of Vienna they are much given to intrigue; and an affair of this kind is ſo far from being ſcandalous, that a woman gains credit by the rank of her gallant, and is reckoned ſilly and unfaſhionable, if ſhe ſcrupulouſly adheres to the virtue of chaſtity. But this, as well as ſome things which have been related above, it is hoped, is more the manners of courts, than of places leſs expoſed to temptation, and conſequently leſs diſſolute; and we are well aſſured, that in all the nations we have mentioned, there are many women who do honour to humanity, not by chaſtity only, but alſo by a variety of other virtues.

The greateſt part of the other European nations, not having yet arrived at that point in the ſcale of politeneſs, where nature begins to be diſcarded, and religion obliterated, their women are of courſe leſs the votaries of the Cyprian goddeſs. In Great-

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Britain, moſt parts of Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Pruſſia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, and Ruſſia, chaſtity is ſtill a faſhionable virtue, and the other female virtues attend in her train. Indelicacy is not ſubſtituted for wit, nor are double entendres almoſt ever heard from the lips of any female above an oyſter-wench or a proſtitute. Some women, indeed, of the higher ranks in England have of late ſet ſcandal at defiance, and laughed at character: but they have commonly found themſelves engaged in an unequal conteſt; the laſh of ſcandal has made them ſmart, in ſpite of their ſeeming indifference; and their want of a good character has excluded them almoſt from every company, and of courſe from more than half the joys of life. Their pernicious example is, however, in our opinion, not widely diffuſed. Our women are, in general, chaſte and delicate; and while we do not give improper countenance to thoſe who have acted otherwiſe, will continue to be ſo. But ſhould the unhappy period ever arrive, when our men ſhall not diſtinguiſh between her who is virtuous, and her who is not, the character we have here given of our women will no longer exiſt, and we ſhall have ourſelves to blame for having deſtroyed it.

But beſides the virtues of modeſty and chaſtity, in which the women of Europe far ſurpaſs all others, they are not leſs diſtinguiſhable for many other good qualities both of the head and of the heart. It is in ſome of the politer European nations only, where we meet with that inexpreſſible ſoftneſs and delicacy of manners, which, cultivated by education, appears as much ſuperior to what it does without it, as the poliſhed diamond appears ſuperior to that which is rough from the mine. In all other parts of the world, women have attained to ſo little knowledge, and ſo little

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conſequence, that we can only conſider their virtues as of the negative kind. In Europe they are of another nature; they conſiſt not only in abſtinence from evil, but in doing good: we ſee women every day exerting themſelves in acts of benevolence and charity, in relieving the diſtreſſes of the body, and binding up the wounds of the mind; in reconciling the differences of friends, and preventing the ſtrife of enemies; and, to ſum up all, in that care and attention to their offspring, which is ſo neceſſary and eſſential a part of their duty.

BUT, as impartial hiſtorians, we hold not up the fair ſide of the picture only, but ſhall turn to the other alſo. This leſs lovely ſide, however, we ſhall preſent to our female readers, without any of the ſourneſs of the declaimer, or the ſarcaſtical ſneering of the ſatiriſt; being fully ſenſible, eſpecially when we addreſs ourſelves to the ſofter ſex, that a reproof is half loſt, where ill-nature is joined; and having only in our view, the improvement of their underſtandings, and leading them by gentle arts to thoſe paths of rectitude and decorum, from which ſome of them have deviated.

THOUGH we have declared it as our opinion, that there is in moſt parts of Europe more female virtue than in any other place on the globe, yet even here, we find women liable to a variety of foibles and failings. As chaſtity is ſo highly valued in almoſt all the nations of our continent, we meet often with women who are fooliſh enough to perſuade themſelves, and endeavour to perſuade the world, that the poſſeſſion of it can atone for the want of every other thing amiable and virtuous; and if any one is hardy enough to hint at their faults, they anſwer with no ſmall ſeverity, in the cant phraſe, "I am an honeſt woman, at leaſt."

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THERE is amongſt us another female character, not uncommon, which we denominate the outrageouſly virtuous. Women of this ſtamp never fail to ſeize all opportunities of exclaiming, in the bittereſt manner, againſt every one upon whom even the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion of indiſcretion or unchaſtity has fallen; taking care, as they go along, to magnify every mole-hill into a mountain, and every thoughtleſs freedom into the blackeſt of crimes. But beſides the illiberality of thus treating ſuch as may frequently be innocent, you may credit us, dear countrywomen, when we aver, that ſuch a behaviour, inſtead of making you appear more virtuous, only draws down upon you, by thoſe who know the world, ſuſpicions not much to your advantage. Your ſex are in general ſuſpected by ours, of being too much addicted to ſcandal and defamation; a ſuſpicion, which has not ariſen of late years, as we find in the ancient laws of England a puniſhment, known by the name of ducking-ſtool, annexed to ſcolding and defamation in the women, though no ſuch puniſhment nor crime is taken notice of in the men. This crime, however, we perſuade ourſelves, you are leſs guilty of, than is commonly believed: but there is another, of a nature not more excuſable, from which we cannot ſo much exculpate you; which is, that harſh and forbidding appearance you put on, and that ill-treatment, which you no doubt think it neceſſary, for the illuſtration of your own virtue, you ſhould beſtow on every one of your ſex who has deviated from the path of rectitude. A behaviour of this nature, beſides being ſo oppoſite to that meek and gentle ſpirit which ſhould diſtinguiſh female nature, is in every reſpect contrary to the charitable and forgiving temper of the Chriſtian religion, and infallibly ſhuts the door of repentance againſt an unfortunate ſiſter, willing, perhaps, to abandon the vices into which heedleſs inadvertency had plunged her, and

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from which none of you can promiſe yourſelves an abſolute ſecurity.

We wiſh not, fair countrywomen, like the declaimer and ſatiriſt, to paint you all vice and imperfection, nor, like the venal panegyriſt, to exhibit you all virtue. As impartial hiſtorians, we confeſs that you have, in the preſent age, many virtues and good qualities, which were either nearly or altogether unknown to your anceſtors; but do you not exceed them in ſome follies and vices alſo? Is not the levity, diſſipation, and extravagance of the women of this century arrived to a pitch unknown and unheard-of in former times? Is not the courſe which you ſteer in life, almoſt entirely directed by vanity and faſhion? And are there not too many of you, who, throwing aſide reaſon and good conduct, and deſpiſing the counſel of your friends and relations, ſeem determined to follow the mode of the world, however it may ſavour of folly, and however it may be mixed with vice? Do not the generality of you dreſs, and appear, above your ſtation, and are not many of you aſhamed to be ſeen performing the duties of it? To ſum up all, do not too, too many of you act as if you thought the care of a family, and the other domeſtic virtues, beneath your attention, and that the ſole end for which you were ſent into the world, was to pleaſe and divert yourſelves, at the expence of thoſe poor wretches the men, whom you conſider as obliged to ſupport you in every kind of idleneſs and extravagance? While ſuch is your conduct, and while the contagion is every day increaſing, you are not to be ſurpriſed if the men, ſtill fond of you as playthings, in the hours of mirth and revelry, ſhun every ſerious connection with you; and while they wiſh to be poſſeſſed of your charms, are ſo much afraid of your manners and conduct, that they

they prefer the cheerleſs ſtate of a batchelor, to the numberleſs evils ariſing from being tied to a modern wife.

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Difference between the paſt and preſent times.

We ſhall conclude this chapter with a few general obſervations on the characteriſtic differences of the paſt and preſent ages of the world. Such, among many, is the proclivity to admiring whatever is paſt, and deſpiſing whatever is preſent, that every thing ſtamped with the ruſt of remote antiquity muſt infallibly be all good and virtuous, and every thing of a modern date as unqueſtionably be vice and folly. According to ſuch, the times of the patriarchs were the beſt and happieſt periods of the world, even ſo much ſo, that they were diſtinguiſhed by the ſplendid title of golden age, while our modern times are branded with the epithet of the age of iron. To give us ſome idea of this golden age, many authors of conſiderable merit have laboured to perſuade us, that the earth brought forth her fruit ſpontaneouſly, that the lion and the tyger were harmleſs as the lamb, and that mankind, free from pride, ambition, avarice, and all the vicious and tumultuous paſſions of the mind, lived in the moſt happy ſecurity and ſimplicity; and ſome have even gone ſo far as to repreſent theſe times as exempted from thoſe infirmities to which nature, folly, and climate, have always ſubjected humanity. Theſe and other fables of the like nature, though they may do credit to the ſong of the poet, diſgrace the record of the hiſtorian; but in forming our judgment of paſt events, we are not to be directed by the poet, the declaimer, the panegyriſt, nor the ſatiriſt; we muſt liſten to facts only, and we muſt alſo conſider the general complexion of the times in which they happened.

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SUCH authors as we have mentioned would make us believe, that avarice and ambition were unknown to the happy beings they have placed in the firſt ages of the world; but all that remains of the hiſtory of theſe ages, teaches quite another doctrine, and demonſtrates that, almoſt from the remoteſt antiquity, there were wars, entered into with the moſt flagrant injuſtice, and carried on with the moſt ſhocking inhumanity; murders and robberies conſtantly committed, and the moſt wanton cruelties often executed without any provocation; that brother cheated in the moſt ſolemn manner his brother; that the fair ſex were maltreated and abuſed; and in fine, that a ſavage barbarity of manners ſubjected every thing to ſuperior ſtrength. They would likewiſe perſuade us, that pomp and luxury were then altogether unknown; but theſe are only comparative, not abſolute terms; as what might well deſerve the name of luxury in one period, would be the utmoſt ſimplicity in another. We grant indeed, that thoſe elegant pleaſures which are the reſult of knowledge, induſtry, and a perfection of the arts, had then no exiſtence; but they had a pomp and a luxury proportioned to their powers, and the means they had of ſhewing them, and in theſe they exerted, nay even overſtretched themſelves perhaps as much as in our modern times, as we ſhall ſee more fully in the ſequel of this work. Let us then no longer continue to aſcribe ſo many chimerical virtues to thoſe ages, when the plainneſs and ſimplicity of manners which then prevailed, was evidently owing more to their rude and uncultivated ſtate, than to their better principles; and when the virtues for which they are celebrated, were more of the negative than the poſitive kind.

THOSE abandoned cities which were conſumed by fire from heaven, need not be brought as examples of the total corruption of

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of ancient manners. We have unhappily too many other proofs of it, and of theſe the diffidence that every one then entertained of his neighbour, is not the weakeſt. Abraham and Iſaac, both apprehended that they ſhould be ſlain for the ſake of their wives; and it was no uncommon thing for a man to require an oath of his neighbour that he would do him no harm. The ſtories of Judah and Tamar, his daughter-in-law, and of the rape of Dinah, give us ſome idea of the debauchery and injuſtice which then reigned upon the earth. Judah condemned Tamar to ſuffer death for the crime that he had committed with her, and the perfidious ſons of Jacob ſlew the Sechemites after they had ratified a treaty of peace with them in the moſt ſolemn manner. Nor were fidelity and honour more reſpected in private than in public life; Jacob bargained with his uncle to ſerve him ſeven years for his daughter Rachel; when the ſervice was accompliſhed, Laban ſhamefully impoſed upon him Leah, and had even the effrontery to juſtify what he had done, and exact another ſeven years ſervice for Rachel. Jacob deceived his brother Eſau; the ſons of Jacob ſold Joſeph their brother as a ſlave; an old prophet, by a pretended commiſſion from the Lord, decoyed a brother prophet to his houſe, and made him eat bread and drink water, contrary to the commandment that had been given him, and for the diſobedience of which he was ſlain by a lion. Such were mankind in the patriarchal ages.

When we trace their character through the ſubſequent periods mentioned in the Old Teſtament, we meet with a numerous liſt of the ſame enormities and crimes. When from this ſacred record, we turn towards the traditions and fragments of the hiſtory of other nations, they give us no more favourable idea of theſe

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theſe primitive times; from them we learn, that men lived at firſt without government, and without law, without mutual confidence, or mutual friendſhip; paſſion and appetite dictated what they ſhould do, and they were not ſolicitous about the juſtice, but only about the convenience and utility of their actions. The whole of the political hiſtory of ancient Egypt is a ſcene of ſlaughter and injuſtice. The cruelty and other crimes of Semiramis excite our indignation, and the mad exploits of Alexander, were they not ſo much marked with blood, would almoſt excite our laughter. The heroic ages of Greece exhibit little beſides rape, murder, and adultery; and the ſubſequent periods are full of tyranny, proſcription, and oppreſſion.

THE Romans were at firſt a ſet of lawleſs banditti; after they had formed themſelves into a community, and peopled Rome, they became famous for moderation and juſtice, wherever the concerns of their republic were not in queſtion, and at laſt turned the moſt venal and profligate of mankind. When the Roman empire was deſtroyed, were the crimes of the people extirpated; or does hiſtory paint mankind as meliorated by ſo great an event? The reverſe we are afraid is the caſe; gloomy ſuperſtition now ſtarted up, perſecution ſtalked terrible behind her, and drenched Europe in blood. Rome erected a ſpiritual, when ſhe had loſt a temporal, authority, and indiſcriminately trampled on the rights of heaven and earth; ſcarcely was there a nation among us, whoſe roads were not infeſted with gangs of lawleſs aſſaſſins, who robbed and murdered the traveller as he went along, and the laws were too feeble to bring theſe, or even ſingle offenders, to juſtice. Nor was a man's own houſe even an aſylum, where his life and property could be ſecure; his ſtronger

neighbour often entered it in the night, and bereaved him at once of property and of life. Such was the picture of Europe till the beginning of the ſixteenth century, when, by a variety of cauſes, which it is not our province to enumerate, the manners began to ſoften, juſtice to triumph over oppreſſion, and the whole to aſſume that order and ſecurity in which we now behold it.

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Of the Influence of Female Society.

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OF all the various cauſes which tend to influence our conduct and form our manners, none operate ſo powerfully as the ſociety of the other ſex. If perpetually confined to their company, they infallibly ſtamp upon us effeminacy, and ſome other of the ſignatures of their nature; if conſtantly excluded from it, we contract a roughneſs of behaviour, and ſlovenlineſs of perſon, ſufficient to point out to us the loſs we have ſuſtained. If we ſpend a reaſonable portion of our time in the company of women, and another in the company of our own ſex, it is then only that we imbibe a proper ſhare of the ſoftneſs of the female, and at the ſame time retain the firmneſs and conſtancy of the male.

WOMEN in all ages have ſet the greateſt value on courage and bravery in the men; and men, in all civilized ages and countries, have placed the chiefeſt female excellence in beauty, chaſtity, and a certain nameleſs ſoftneſs and delicacy of perſon and behaviour. The cauſe of this will unfold itſelf in conſidering the nature of the different ſexes. Women, in themſelves weak, timid, and defenceleſs, ſtand in the greateſt need of courage and bravery, to defend them from the aſſaults that may be made on their bodies, or advantages that may be gained over their minds; men, on the other hand, enterpriſing and robuſt, have the greateſt need of female ſoftneſs, to ſmooth their rugged nature, to wear off the aſ-

perities they daily contract in their buſineſs and connections with one another, and by the lenient balm of endearment, to blunt the edge of corroſive care.

Effects of the company of women.

WE have juſt now obſerved, that men ſecluded from the company of women, become ſlovenly in their perſons, and rough and untractable in their manners; but this is not all, even their gait aſſumes a more uncouth appearance, and their voice a hoarſer and leſs muſical tone; their ſenſations become leſs delicate, their ſentiments leſs religious, and their paſſions ſeem to have more of the brutal, than thoſe of the reſt of their ſex; circumſtances which appear but too conſpicuous in ſailors, miners, and other people who either ſpend the greateſt part of their time altogether without women, or in the company of ſuch as have loſt every female excellence. Should it be alleged, that theſe alterations are owing to the horrid trade of war, in which ſailors are ſo often engaged, the ſame thing ſhould then be obſerved in ſoldiers. Should we have recourſe to the ſurlineſs of the winds and waves, againſt which they maintain a perpetual combat, though theſe may in ſome meaſure account for their behaviour, yet it will appear to an accurate obſerver, that the ultimate cauſe is to be found only in the want of that ſocial intercourſe with the other ſex, which of all things has the moſt powerful tendency to ſoften and humanize the mind.

Women loſe not their ſoftneſs when excluded from the men.

THOUGH men ſecluded from the company of women, become the moſt rude and uncultivated of animals, yet women almoſt entirely ſecluded from the company of men, do not, in ſome particular caſes, loſe almoſt any thing of their ſoftneſs and delicacy. In nunneries, for inſtance, we often perſuade ourſelves, that theſe

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qualities rather increaſe; but here we are to conſider, that women ſo placed, are not altogether excluded from the company of men, having frequent opportunities of ſeeing and converſing with them through a grate; and beſides, the melancholy reflections on the ſweets of ſociety, of friendſhip, and above all, of love, which they have for ever loſt, give them an air of penſive ſoftneſs, which never fails to make the ſex appear more lovely, and to raiſe our pity, a paſſion which, we may ſay, when it has beauty for its object, is more than ſiſter to love, and inſpires us with the ſtrongeſt partiality.

Contract a roughneſs when conſtantly with men.

BUT though women who are ſhut up by themſelves preſerve their native ſoftneſs and delicacy, yet thoſe of them, who, abandoned by, or deſpiſing the company of their own ſex, aſſociate only with ours, ſoon become the rougheſt and moſt uncultivated of the human ſpecies; a fact which the experience of every one muſt have abundantly demonſtrated to him, and which affords the ſtrongeſt poſſible proof of the ſalutary influence of female ſociety. But in order to ſhew more prrticularly the benefits ariſing from this ſource, let us take a ſhort view of the ſtate of ſociety among the ancients, and then turn our eyes towards thoſe countries, where, at preſent, men and women live almoſt conſtantly ſeparated from each other, and where the men ſeldom or never deign to viſit the women but to ſhew their authority, or to gratify animal appetite.

View of ſociety in the early ages.

WHEN we look back to the more early ages of antiquity, we find but little ſocial intercourſe between the two ſexes, and that, in conſequence thereof, both were leſs amiable in their perſons and manners. In the patriarchal ages, it would ſeem, that the women generally

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generally reſided by themſelves, in apartments allotted to them in the back-parts of the tents of their parents and huſbands; a cuſtom long after continued, and in ſome places at this day obſerved, among the deſcendants of the patriarchs; the effects of which, on the tempers and diſpoſitions of the men, and even upon thoſe of the women, were apparent. Neither of the ſexes were lively nor cheerful; the men were cruel, gloomy, treacherous, and revengeful; the women, in a leſſer degree, ſhared all theſe unſocial vices. Many ages elapſed after the times we are ſpeaking of, before women aroſe into conſequence enough to become the companions of an hour devoted to ſociety, as well as of that devoted to love. Even the Babylonians, who appear to have allowed their women more liberty than any of the ancients, ſeem not to have lived with them in a friendly and familiar manner; but the little intercourſe the ſexes had with each other, being ſtill greater than that of the neighbouring nations, they acquired thereby a poliſh and refinement unknown to any of the people who ſurrounded them. The manners of both ſexes were ſofter, and better calculated to pleaſe, and to cleanlineſs and dreſs they paid more attention. Such were the effects of female ſociety on the Babylonians; but they had not carried it far enough to become properly cultivated. The Sybarites, who had carried it by much too far, in a ſeries of years loſt by it, all that firmneſs of body and of mind peculiar to the men, and contracted, if we may be allowed the expreſſion, a more than female effeminacy.

WHAT a rude and barbarous people the Greeks were, during the heroic ages, we have already ſeen: when we trace them downward to thoſe periods in which they became famous for their knowledge of the arts and ſciences, we find their rudeneſs but a

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little altered, and their manners ſoftened only a few degrees; it is not therefore arts, ſciences, and learning, but the company of the other ſex only, that forms the manners, and renders the man agreeable. But the company and converſation of that ſex, as we have before related, was among the Greeks ſhamefully neglected; and particularly among the Lacedemonians, who on that account were the moſt rude and uncivilized of all their neighbours. In their more early periods, the Romans were ſcarcely behind the Greeks in rudeneſs and barbarity; but they were ſome time a community without women, and conſequently without any thing to ſoften the ferocity of male nature. The Sabine virgins, whom they had ſtolen, appear to have infuſed into them the firſt ideas of politeneſs; but as they ſpent the greateſt part of their time in the field, or in the Forum, and in general did not make companions of their wives and daughters, it was many ages before the roughneſs of the warrior, and clowniſhneſs of the farmer, began to give place to the politeneſs of the gentleman; a revolution of manners, which did not begin to ſhew itſelf till about the time when the Cæſars aſſumed the empire; and from that time the intercourſe between the ſexes became ſo eaſy, and gallantry grew ſo much into faſhion, that the hardy Roman was at length ſoftened down to the delicate voluptuary.

The ſame cauſes exiſted among the nations contemporary with the Romans, and they produced the ſame effects. None of the fierce inhabitants of the North had either time or inclination for the company of their women; and on that account they were deſtitute of ornaments and graces, and equally uncultivated in body and in mind. Were we to proceed on our ſurvey of antiquity, we ſhould find, that it was only a few centuries ago that the fair

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ſex began in Europe to be conſidered in a rational light. Before the introduction of chivalry, they were looked upon as beings unworthy of the company or attention of the men: by that inſtitution they were raiſed to the rank of divinities, approached with reverence, and conſidered as moving in a ſphere too exalted for the familiarity of mortal men; and it was only upon the decline of this romantic turn of mind, that they began to take that place in the ſcale of rational beings, for which nature ſeems to have intended them; to be ſocial companions, to enhance the value of all the pleaſures, and alleviate all the pains and ills, of life.

State of the Eaſterns.

FROM this ſlight ſurvey of antiquity, let us turn our eyes towards the preſent ſtate of mankind in the Eaſt; where jealouſy, that tyrant of the ſoul, has excluded all the joys and comforts of mixed ſociety: there, we ſhall not only find the men gloomy, ſuſpicious, cowardly, and cruel, but diveſted of almoſt all the finer ſentiments that ariſe from friendſhip and from love. There, we ſhall find, that roughneſs and barbarity have ſettled their empire, and triumph over the human mind: but there, ſhall we hardly be able to diſcover the tender parent, or the indulgent huſband; there, ſhall we with difficulty find any of the ſocial virtues, or the ſentimental feelings: all theſe are commonly the offſpring of mixed ſociety; and though men may improve their heads in the company of their own ſex, we may affirm, that the company and converſation of women alone is the proper ſchool for the heart. Should any one doubt the truth of this, let him turn over a few volumes of the hiſtory of any of theſe nations, where the ſexes live excluded from each other, and he will meet with the moſt ample conviction.

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State of Europe.

WHEN from theſe unſocial regions, where, by being deprived of the company of the fair, life is deprived of more than half its joys, we turn ourſelves to Europe, we eaſily diſcover, that in proportion to the time ſpent in the converſation of their women, the people are poliſhed and refined; and leſs ſo, in proportion as they neglect or deſpiſe them. The Ruſſians, Poles, and even the Dutch, pay leſs attention to their females than any of their neighbours, and are of conſequence leſs diſtinguiſhed for the graces of their perſons, and the feelings of their hearts. The Spaniards, when they formerly had not the benefits of female ſociety, were remarkable for their cruelties: at this period, when locks, bars, and duennas are becoming unfaſhionable, and women mixing among them, they are faſt aſſuming the culture and humanity of the neighbouring nations. So powerful, in ſhort, is the company and converſation of the fair, in diffuſing happineſs and hilarity, that even the cloud which hangs on the thoughtful brow of an Engliſhman begins in the preſent age to brighten, by his devoting to the ladies a larger ſhare of time than was formerly done by his anceſtors.

BUT if we would contemplate the influence of female ſociety in its greateſt perfection, we muſt take a view of the Italians and French; in the laſt of which, we are conſtantly preſented with tempers ſo gay and cheerful, that we are almoſt tempted to think them ſuperior to all the ills and accidents of life: among them only we find happineſs ſmiling amid want and poverty, and pleaſure and amuſement, with all their ſportive train, not only attending on the rich and affluent, but on the humble villager, and dancing around the ruſtic cot. For this fortitude of the French in ſupporting their ſpirits through all the adverſe circumſtances of this world, for their vivacity and cheerfulneſs of temper,

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per, various reaſons have been aſſigned, as the lightneſs of their food, and ſalubrity of their air; cauſes to which a great deal may be juſtly attributed, but which are undoubtedly much aſſiſted in their operations by the conſtant mixture of the young and old, and by the levity and ſprightlineſs of female converſation; for we ſcruple not to aſſert, that this vivacity of the French ladies, and the conſtant attendance paid them by the men, are the chief cauſes why the cares and ills of life ſit lighter on the ſhoulders of that fantaſtic people, than on thoſe of any other country in the world.

In all other countries, the men make excurſions, and form parties of pleaſure, by themſelves: The French reckon that an excurſion is dull, and that a party of pleaſure cannot deſerve that name, without a mixture of both ſexes join to compoſe it. The French women do not even withdraw from the table after meals; nor do the men diſcover that propenſity to have them diſmiſſed, which we ſo often meet with in England, and which is a certain indication, that they either want to debauch themſelves with liquor, or indulge in thoſe indecencies of diſcourſe, which the company of women always reſtrains. It is alleged by thoſe who have no reliſh for the converſation of the fair ſex, that their company curbs the freedom of ſpeech, and reſtrains the jollity of mirth; but if the converſation and the mirth are decent, and the company are capable of reliſhing any thing but wine, the very reverſe is the caſe; at leaſt, it is always remarkably ſo among the French: nor is any thing more natural; for, the fair ſex in general being leſs diſturbed by the cares and anxieties of life, are not only themſelves more cheerful, but more eager to promote mirth and feſtivity.

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Advantages of female ſociety.

BUT the advantages of female ſociety are not altogether confined to the circumſtances we have now related; they extend themſelves much farther, and ſpread their influence over almoſt every cuſtom and every action of ſocial life. It is to the ſocial intercourſe with women, that the men are indebted for every effort they make to pleaſe and be agreeable; and it is to the ambition of pleaſing they owe all their elegance of manners, as well as all the neatneſs and ornaments of dreſs. It is to the ſame cauſe, alſo, that they frequently owe their ſobriety and temperance, and conſequently their health; for to drunkenneſs and irregularity nothing is ſo effectual a check, as the company of modeſt women; inſomuch that it is but ſeldom we find a man ſo loſt to ſhame, as to get drunk when he is in, or to go into their company. To them we are not leſs frequently indebted for the calming of violent diſputes, and preventing of quarrels, which, with every other ſpecies of rudeneſs, are happily reckoned ſo indecent in their preſence, that we often poſtpone them till another opportunity; and in the interim, reaſon reſumes the rein which paſſion had uſurped. But this is not all: many diſputes and quarrels, already begun, have been amicably ſettled by the interpoſition of their good offices, or, at leaſt, the fatal effects of them prevented by their tears and mediation. Fond of the ſofter ſcenes of peace, they have often had the addreſs to prevent, by their arguments and interceſſion, the direful effects of war; and, afraid of loſing their huſbands and relations, they have ſometimes ruſhed between two hoſtile armies ready to engage, and turned the horrid ſcenes of deſtruction into thoſe of friendſhip and feſtivity.

IN our ſex, there is a kind of conſtitutional or maſculine pride, which hinders us from yielding, in points of knowledge or of honour,

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honour, to each other. Though this may be deſigned by nature for ſeveral uſeful purpoſes, yet it is often the ſource alſo of a variety of evils, the moſt dangerous to the peace of ſociety: but we lay it entirely aſide in our connections with women, and with pleaſure ſubmit to ſuch dictates and behaviour from their ſex, as from our own would call up every iraſcible particle of our blood, and inflame every ungovernable paſſion. This accuſtomed ſubmiſſion gives a new and leſs imperious turn to our ideas, teaches us to obey where we were uſed to command, and to reaſon where we uſed to be in a paſſion; to conſider as only good-breeding and complaiſance, that which before we looked upon as the moſt abject and unbecoming meanneſs: and thus the ſtern ſeverity of the male is ſoftened and rendered agreeable by the gentleneſs peculiar to the female nature. Hence we may reſt aſſured, that it is the converſation of virtuous and ſenſible women only, that can properly fit us for ſociety; and that, by abating the ferocity of our more iraſcible paſſions, can lead us on to that gentleneſs of deportment, diſtinguiſhed by the name of humanity. The tenderneſs we have for them ſoftens the ruggedneſs of our nature; and the virtues we aſſume, in order to make a better figure in their eyes, ſometimes become ſo habitual to us, that we never afterward lay them aſide.

We are aware, that in this country it is too much the faſhion to ſuppoſe that books, and the company of men only, are neceſſary to furniſh every qualification requiſite for the ſcholar and the gentleman; but we would deſire ſuch as are of this opinion to compare the generality of the gentlemen of this country, to thoſe of France and Italy, and they will find, that though we perhaps excel them in deepneſs of thought and ſolidity of judg-

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ment, we are greatly their inferiors in urbanity, in addreſs, and knowledge of the world: for though books may furniſh proper ideas, and experience improve the underſtanding, it is only the company and acquaintance of the ladies, which can beſtow that eaſineſs of addreſs by which the fine gentleman is diſtinguiſhed from the mere ſcholar, and man of buſineſs. The French and Italians educate their nobility in the drawing-room, at the toilette, and places of public amuſement, where they are conſtantly in the company of women. The Engliſh educate theirs at the college, and at Newmarket, where books, grooms, and jockies, are their only companions: the former are often the moſt fantaſtical of beings; the latter, the moſt ignorant, imperious, and ſurly: ſomething between theſe two extremes of education, while it preſerved the dignity and firmneſs of the man, might infuſe a proper quantity of the ſoftneſs and addreſs of the woman.

When we look a few centuries backward to theſe periods, when, even in Europe, there was but little intercourſe between the two ſexes, we find that the men were hardly ruder in their manners than in their perſons; they wore long beards, which totally covered the chin, and often hung a great way down the breaſt. Beards are the work of nature, and however troubleſome and uncouth, had no moral turpitude, nor tendency to debauch the manners; but the men had, in thoſe times, other modes of dreſſing which violated every idea of decency. As the ladies began to have more influence, beards were mutilated down to muſtachoes, though the learned exclaimed againſt the horrid innovation, as diſcovering a taſte which tended more to gratify the women, than to keep up the dignity of the maſculine countenance; and though the church conſidered the mutilation as little

ſhort

ſhort of apoſtacy, becauſe Moſes and Jeſus were always painted with long beards. As the gentlemen found that the ladies had no great reliſh for muſtachoes, which were the relics of a beard, they cut and curled them into various faſhions, to render them more agreeable; and at laſt finding that ſuch labour was in vain, gave them up altogether. But as the gentlemen of the three learned profeſſions were ſuppoſed to be endowed with, or at leaſt to ſtand in need of, more wiſdom than other people, and as the longeſt beard had always been ſuppoſed to ſprout from the wiſeſt chin, to ſupply this mark of diſtinction, which they had loſt, they contrived to ſmother up their heads in enormous quantities of frizzled hair, that they might bear the greater reſemblance to an owl, the bird ſacred to wiſdom and Minerva. Such profeſſional wigs, however, were long an object of the ridicule of wits, and the diſlike of the women, who, to the honour of their taſte and influence, have, in the preſent age, baniſhed by far the greater part of them.

MAN, ſecluded from the company of women, is not only a rough and uncultivated, but a dangerous, animal to ſociety; for, in ſuch a ſituation, the animal appetite is daily gathering ſtrength, till at laſt it becomes almoſt quite ungovernable; a fact well known to the inhabitants of ſea-ports, who have too frequent opportunities of ſeeing the force of that ungovernable paſſion, with which ſailors returned from a long voyage, commonly dedicate themſelves to the worthleſs women who attend on account of their money. And a fact which alſo appears evident from the conduct of the men in all countries, where women are kept as the miſer does his gold; in ſuch countries, the paſſions of the men are ſo raiſed by partial glances, and by brooding over the thoughts of ideal beauty, and ideal happineſs, in the enjoyment of it, and ſo inflamed

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flamed with almoſt inſurmountable obſtacles to that enjoyment, that if they ever happen to find a woman alone, they attack her in the moſt furious and licentious manner; nor have the women here ſuch a power of reſiſtance as they have in countries where they are accuſtomed to the company of the men; ſecluded from them by a barbarous cuſtom, they naturally form notions of the happineſs they would derive from them, of the moſt wild and romantic nature: theſe notions diſarm their virtue, and make them fall an eaſy prey to the firſt rude invader. From this cauſe it happens, that, in ſpite of cautious parents, and jealous huſbands, and of locks, bars, and eunuchs, the chaſtity of the women is leſs ſecure in ſuch countries, than where the ſexes live free and eaſy together: we may therefore aſſert, that the benefits of mixed ſociety are not confined to the men alone, but extend to the women alſo; infuſe into their minds a power of checking the attacks of inſolence, and by making man the object of their daily converſe, make him leſs valuable, and conſequently leſs dangerous, either to their virtue or their happineſs; and we may further aver, that this ſociety teaches the men to regulate and govern their paſſions with greater propriety, as nothing can be more certain, than that rape, adultery, and every evil that follow them, are more common in countries where the ſexes live ſeparate, than where they enjoy the company of each other.

THERE is nothing by which the happineſs of individuals and of ſociety is ſo much promoted, as by conſtant efforts to pleaſe; and theſe efforts are in a great meaſure only produced by the company of women; for men, by themſelves, relax in almoſt every particular of good-breeding and complaiſance, and appear the creatures of mere nature: but no ſooner does a woman appear, than

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than the ſcene is changed, and they become emulous to ſhew all their good qualifications. It is by the arts of pleaſing only, that women can attain to any degree of conſequence or of power; and it is by pleaſing only, that they can hope to become objects of love and affection; attainments which, as they are of all others the moſt dear to them, prompt them to cultivate moſt aſſiduouſly the arts of pleaſing; arts for which they are well qualified by nature. In their forms lovely, in their manners ſoft and engaging, ſuch are they by nature and by art, that they can infuſe by their ſmiles, by their air and addreſs, a thouſand nameleſs ſweets into ſociety, which without them would be inſipid, and barren of ſentiment and of feeling. But to enjoy any pleaſure in perfection, we muſt never be ſatiated with it; and therefore it requires more than common prudence in a woman, to be much in company, and ſtill retain that deference and reſpect which we would voluntarily pay to her, were we ſeldomer indulged with her preſence. A few centuries ago, women were rarely acceſſible, but, ſhut up in houſes and caſtles, lived retired from the buſtle of the world. When they deigned to ſhew themſelves, they were approached as divinities: a tranſient view of them often ſet the heart on fire; and their ſmiles conferred a happineſs, and raiſed an enthuſiaſtic ardour, of which at this period we can hardly form any idea. By degrees, as manners became more free, and the ſexes mixed together with leſs ceremony, women began to be ſeen with leſs trepidation, approached with leſs deference, and ſunk in their value as they became objects of greater familiarity. Nor was this peculiar to the times we are delineating: the ſame effect always has, and always will happen from the ſame cauſe; let the other ſex, therefore, learn this inſtructive leſſon from it, that half the eſteem and veneration we ſhew them, is owing to

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their modeſty and reſerve, and that a contrary conduct may make the moſt enchanting goddeſs degenerate in our eyes to a mere woman, with all the frailties of mortality about her. The forward beauty, whoſe face is known in every walk, and in every public place, may be given as a toaſt, and have her name inſcribed on the windows of a tavern, but ſhe rarely ever becomes an object of eſteem, or is ſolicited to be a companion for life.

We ſhall conclude what we had to ſay on the advantages of female ſociety, by obſerving, that it ſeems not only to be the cauſe of the riſe and progreſs of polite manners, and of ſentimental feelings, but alſo of the fine arts. When we view the countries where women are confined, we find the inhabitants of them diſtinguiſhed for barbarity of manners; when we view the ſame countries in the periods when the women begin to have their liberty, we immediately perceive the manners begin to ſoften and improve. In no country can this be more ſtrongly exemplified than in Spain; they had formerly leſs communication with the fair ſex than any other people of Europe, and were conſequently greatly behind all of them in politeneſs and elegance of manners; but ſince their women have been under leſs reſtraint, the progreſs of manners has been ſo rapid, that they are hardly behind any of their neighbours. To the ſociety of women we are indebted for the emulation of pleaſing, and conferring happineſs on others; and to this emulation we certainly owe the greater part, if not the, whole of the fine arts. If any one doubts of this, let him conſider the condition of theſe countries, where men have no ſuch motive of emulation, and let him there diſcover the fine arts if he can; he may indeed ſay, that in the Eaſt he finds ſome of thoſe arts in as great perfection as in Europe; but he diſcovers alſo, that they have

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exiſted there time immemorial, without the leaſt advance or improvement; and why? becauſe the Eaſtern has no motive to render him emulous of pleaſing; has he a rival in love, he is under no obligation to ſucceed in preference to him by ſhewing preferable accompliſhments; does he court a coy fair, who ſhews reluctance in accepting of him, he is not deſirous to gain her affections by good offices, and by inventions to render her life eaſy and comfortable, but at once buys her of her ſordid parents or relations. Widely different is the caſe in Europe; women of ſenſe judge of the men by the elegance of their perſons, of their manners, and by their intellectual faculties; hence the men have conſtantly occaſion to ſhew all theſe to the beſt advantage, and hence, even the fine arts, which we cultivate to pleaſe and to render us amiable, may be rationally conſidered as an effect of female ſociety and of love.

Diſadvantages of female ſociety.

WERE we inclined to write the panegyric, inſtead of the hiſtory of the fair ſex, we might enumerate ſeveral other advantages ariſing from their company and converſation; but, contenting ourſelves with what we have already related on this head, we ſhall now mention ſome of the diſadvantages ariſing from our intercourſe with them. By the learned and ſtudious, it has often been objected to female company, that it ſo enervates and relaxes the mind, and gives it ſuch a turn for trifling, levity, and diſſipation, as renders it altogether unfit for that application which is neceſſary in order to become eminent in any of the ſciences. In proof of this they allege, that the greateſt philoſophers ſeldom or never were men who enjoyed, or were fit for the company or converſation of women. Sir Iſaac Newton hardly ever converſed with any of the ſex, and it is believed, died at laſt as much a ſtranger

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to the joys of love, as he had lived a ſtranger to the fair objects that awaken it in the heart; Bacon, Boyle, Des Cartes, and a variety of others, conſpicuous for their learning and application, were but indifferent companions to the fair. Whether theſe, and many more inſtances of the ſame nature which might be adduced, are ſufficient to eſtabliſh a general rule, we pretend not to determine. Nothing however ſeems more certain, than that the youth who devotes his whole time and attention to female converſation and the little offices of gallantry, never diſtinguiſhes himſelf in the literary world; but without the fatigue and application of ſevere ſtudy, ſuch a man often obtains by female intereſt, what is denied to the merited improvements acquired by the labour of many years.

But beſides this idleneſs and neglect of ſtudy, ſo much complained of as a conſequence of the company of women, ſuch company alſo often leads the men into a ſcene of expenſive amuſements, into a love of finery and oſtentatious ſhow, which they are not able to afford; while regardleſs of every thing but to pleaſe the giddy and unthinking fair, they ruſh forward with thoughtleſs unconcern on the ruin of their fortunes, and awake not from their dream of folly till they find themſelves plunged into poverty, become the jeſt of their acquaintances, and even perhaps ſneered at by the very females who led them into the ſnare. Againſt ſuch weakneſs we ſincerely wiſh to caution the young and unexperienced part of our ſex, and we adviſe them to be careful how they aſſociate with any of the other, who are not endowed with ſenſe as well as virtue; for it is not always to vicious, but frequently to gay and thoughtleſs women, that men owe their ruin.

Such

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SUCH as are enthuſiaſtically zealous for the liberties of mankind, have imagined that the only way to continue a brave, free, and independent people, is to avoid as much as poſſible the company of women, the ſoft ſtrains of muſic, and all the luxuries of the table and of dreſs; and as a proof of their opinion, they tell us, that the Lydians, the Sybarites, and even the hardy Romans themſelves, were debauched, and at length loſt their liberty by their attention to women.

THAT all theſe people were greatly debauched in their manners, hiſtory has left us no room to doubt; but that the company of women was the cauſe of this debauchery, is far from being certain; at leaſt if we take a view of the world as it exiſts in the preſent period, it teaches us a different leſſon; it points out to us, in the moſt clear and diſtinct manner, that liberty and independence, the moſt ineſtimable bleſſings of mankind, are no where at ſo low an ebb, as in the countries where the women have no political influence, and where the men keep almoſt no company with them: it ſhews us, that the men of ſuch countries, inſtead of being the braveſt and moſt independent, are the moſt daſtardly and enſlaved of the human race; and that on the contrary, in the wilds of America, where liberty and independence exiſt in the moſt extenſive ſenſe of the words, the freedom which the women enjoy in mixing with, and in ſome places even of governing along with the men, has not in the leaſt contributed to deſtroy theſe native rights of mankind. That in Europe, where liberty is generally founded on ſocial and rational principles, calculated for the good of the community, the company of the women has not hitherto ſo enervated the men as to induce them to part with it, rather than rouze themſelves from the lap of indolence and eaſe. About two

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hundred and fifty years ago, when Francis the Firſt had not introduced women to court, the French were not half ſo much in the company of their women as at preſent, and yet were not then a more free and independent people; on the contrary, though we ſuppoſe them to have been ſinking in effeminacy ever ſince that period, we have ſeen them at different times make ſuch efforts againſt arbitrary power as have rather increaſed than diminiſhed their privileges. Were the Italians leſs ſlaves to their princes, and to the ſee of Rome in former times, when they were ſcarcely employed in any thing but arts of ſuperſtitious devotion, than at preſent, when they almoſt entirely reſign themſelves to muſic and to women? Or were the Spaniards more free under the gloomy reign of Philip the Second, when, from motives of jealouſy and religion, their women were conſtantly locked up, than they are at preſent when they converſe with them? In ſhort, wherever we meet with a nation of ſlaves, other cauſes beſides the company of their women muſt have contributed to bring them into, and to continue them in, that deſpicable ſtate.

Influence of particular women.

Such are the general influences of female ſociety; the particular influence which every woman of an agreeable perſon, and a tolerable ſhare of good ſenſe, has over every man, we cannot pretend minutely to deſcribe; a taſk of this kind would be better executed by ſome female, verſant in the exerciſe of ſuch a power. When we conſider the two ſexes into which the human genus are divided, it appears in the moſt conſpicuous manner, that the Author of nature has placed the balance of power on the ſide of the male, by giving him not only a body more large and robuſt, but alſo a mind endowed with greater reſolution, and a more extenſive reach. But are theſe qualities altogether without their counterpoiſe?

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poiſe? Are women left without any thing on their ſide to balance this ſuperiority of our nature? Have they no powers to exert, whereby they can reduce this ſeeming ſuperiority to a more equal footing? If they have not, they may juſtly complain of the partiality of nature, and the ſeverity of their lot. But let us attentively conſider this matter, and we ſhall find, that the Author of our being is no ſuch partial parent: we ſhall diſcover, that to each ſex he has given its different qualifications; and that theſe, upon the whole, when properly cultivated and exerted, put men and women nearly on an equal footing with each other, and ſhare the advantages and diſadvantages of life impartially between them. To bend the haughty ſtubbornneſs of man, he has given to woman beauty, and to that beauty has added an inexpreſſible ſoftneſs and perſuaſive force both of words and actions, which but few of the ſex themſelves know the extent of, and which ſtill fewer of ours have the power of reſiſting. Thus, an inſinuating word, a kind look, or even a ſmile, often conquered Alexander, ſubdued Cæſar, and decided the fate of empires and of kingdoms; thus the interceſſion of the mother of Coriolanus ſaved the city of Rome from impending deſtruction, and in one hour brought about a happy event, which the ſenate and people had deſpaired of ever ſeeing accompliſhed. This power of the women, in bending the ſtronger ſex to their will, is no doubt greatly augmented when they have youth and beauty on their ſide: but even with the loſs of theſe it is not always extinguiſhed; of which this laſt circumſtance is an indubitable proof.

But this power of the women does not altogether conſiſt in ſmiles, words, and actions; it often effects its purpoſes by means leſs viſible, and impoſſible to be deſcribed: but theſe means muſt

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conſtantly have for their baſis ſoftneſs and good-nature; they muſt ever be ſuch as throw a veil over the pride of our ſuppoſed ſuperiority, and make us believe, that we are exerting that ſovereign power, which we conſider as our right, when in reality we are yielding it up. The leaſt appearance of the contrary alarms our pride; and ſhe who diſcovers to us her intention to govern by her power, or by her ill-temper, produces an effect on us the other ſex are not ſufficiently aware of, by raiſing a diſguſt, which all our efforts can never conquer, beſides, for the moſt part, failing in her attempt. In ſhort, ſuch a conduct in a woman is the ſame thing as it would be in a lion to fight with his hinder legs, or for a hare to face about, and defy the teeth of the purſuing pack; it is neglecting to make uſe of what nature has furniſhed, and endeavouring to uſe what ſhe thought proper to deny.

We could point out here, were it neceſſary, a great variety of inſtances, where women have governed men by the influence of good-nature and inſinuating manners; but we defy hiſtory to furniſh one ſingle inſtance of this aſcendency having ever been obtained over a man of ſenſe, by brawling, ill-humour, and a viſible conteſt for ſuperiority. No man of feeling is proof againſt the ſofter arts of a ſenſible woman: ſuch arts are armed with an irreſiſtible power. Every man, almoſt, is proof againſt her open attacks; they are the attacks of a bee without a ſting. The daughter of Seſoſtris prevailed upon him by the arts of perſuaſion to undertake the conqueſt of the world: Attoſſa, the wife of Darius, by the ſame means engaged him to carry an expedition he had planned againſt the Scythians, into Greece. In the empire of the Mogul, where women have in general but little influence, Noor-Jehan, a favourite Sultana, prevailed on the emperor her huſband to

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delegate almoſt the whole of the ſovereign power into her hands. But a much more noble inſtance of the exertion of female influence occurs in the queen of Pythius, a prince of Lydia; who, cruel and avaricious beyond meaſure, kept the greater part of his ſubjects ſo conſtantly employed digging in the gold mines, that they had no time for agriculture, and were conſequently in danger of periſhing by famine. Oppreſſed by this tyranny, they took an opportunity of his being abroad, and aſſembled in great numbers, with tears in their eyes, to lay their complaints before his queen; who, commiſerating their condition, after much revolving in her mind how to relieve them, bethought herſelf of the following method. On the return of her huſband, ſhe ordered a magnificent entertainment to be ſerved up to him; but to his great ſurpriſe, when he uncovered the diſhes, none of them contained any thing but gold. Senſible at once of his miſconduct, and ſtruck with the propriety of the method his wife had made uſe of, in order to open his eyes, that he might ſee his folly, and fully convinced that gold could not ſatisfy his own hunger, nor ſave his ſubjects from famine, he immediately gave orders that, in future, no more than one-fifth part of them ſhould be employed in procuring gold from the mines, and that the other four parts ſhould betake themſelves to agriculture and the uſeful arts.

It would be eaſy to multiply inſtances, both ancient and modern, of this aſcendency which women of ſenſe have gained over men of feeling; but we ſhall confine ourſelves to a few. Among theſe, the empreſs Livia may juſtly claim the firſt notice; having attained ſuch an influence over her huſband Auguſtus, that there was hardly any thing he could refuſe her. Many of the married ladies of Rome being anxious to know the means that ſhe had uſed

to

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to attain this end, one of them at laſt venturing to aſk her, ſhe replied, "By being obedient to all his commands; by not endeavouring to diſcover his ſecrets; and by concealing my knowledge of his amours." Henry the Fourth of France, one of the greateſt and moſt amiable of princes, affords a moſt remarkable inſtance of the power women may, by gentle methods, acquire over the men. Tender and compaſſionate in his nature, he could hardly refuſe any thing to ſoftneſs, intreaties, and tears: ſenſible at the ſame time, and jealous of his honour and power, there was hardly any thing he would grant, when attempted to be forced from him by different methods. Hence he was conſtantly governed by his miſtreſſes, and at variance with his wives. The Salique law ordains, that the crown of France ſhall never fall to the diſtaff: but the French women have amply revenged themſelves for this affront; by contriving to govern almoſt every monarch, they have conſtantly governed that great kingdom, from the apparent management of which the law had ſo poſitively excluded them.

FROM ſcripture, and from education, almoſt every man has imbibed an idea of the ſuperiority of his own ſex; he is therefore zealous to maintain that ſuperiority, and jealous of every attack made upon it; but he is at the ſame time endowed with a ſentimental tenderneſs for the other ſex, and a ſtrong inclination to promote their happineſs; which, with regard to them, may be called his weak ſide, and which women of ſenſe eaſily diſcover, and as eaſily take the advantage of. This being the ſtate of things between the two ſexes, nothing ſeems more plain, than that though men govern by law, women may almoſt always govern by the arts of gentleneſs and ſoft perſuaſion. "The empire of woman (ſays a French author) is an empire of ſweetneſs, addreſs, and

"and

" and complaiſance; her commands are careſſes; her menaces are " tears;" and we may add, that the power of ſuch commands and of ſuch menaces is like that of faith, which can remove mountains: it is a power which has nature on its ſide; the principle by her implanted within us, pleads in favour of the ſex, and more than half performs the taſk of making us obey all the commands they lay upon us, when they are laid with gentleneſs of manners, and an inſinuating behaviour. But though men of ſenſibility and good-nature may infallibly be governed by ſoftneſs and addreſs, there are others caſt in a rougher mould, whoſe hearts are ſtrangers to the finer ſenſations, and whoſe ſtubborn feelings bend not even to prayers and intreaties. Women joined to ſuch may ſit down in ſilence and deplore their misfortune; a misfortune which it is beyond their power to remedy; for we have but too good reaſon to affirm, that the temper, upon which gentleneſs and good-nature are loſt, can never be mended by ill-nature. Men of ſenſe will often, for the ſake of peace, ſubmit to be ill-treated by a woman; men deſtitute of ſenſe will retort that treatment with double violence.

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Sketches of Ceremonies and Customs, for the most part observed only by Women.

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AS the manners and customs of a nation, besides being the most entertaining part of its history, serve also to characterise and distinguish it from all others, by pointing out the various pursuits to which the genius of its people are directed; the whims and caprices which climate, chance, or necessity has introduced; the force that the intellectual powers have exerted, in contriving or adopting ceremonies and customs agreeable to reason; in resisting superstition, and discarding whatever is ridiculous in manners, unbecoming in religion, or tyrannical in government; so the customs more peculiar to women, were we enabled by history to give a particular detail of them, on comparing them with those of the men, would greatly assist us in forming a judgment of the comparative merit of the two sexes, in discovering the solid and the flimsy of each, and pointing out which is most directed, in its various pursuits and pleasures, by reason; and which most follows the dictates of custom, or suggestions of fancy.

Obscurity of this subject.

BUT, unhappily, of all other parts of the female history, that of their manners and customs is involved in the greatest obscurity; almost all the writers of antiquity have either passed over them in silence, or blended them so intimately with the ceremo-

nies and cuſtoms of the men, that we are generally at a loſs to diſcover, with any degree of certainty, what is peculiar to each. Nor is the ſubject much better elucidated by the moderns, who, in their voyages and travels, for the moſt part, only inform us of the dreſs, complexion, and behaviour of the women in the countries they have viſited; which, indeed, is commonly all that is in their power; for their ignorance of the language of the people they are deſcribing, precludes them from every ſpecies of information, but what they receive by their eyes. The jealouſy of the men, in many places, hinders them from all acceſs to their women; and the ſhort ſtay made by a traveller affords not the neceſſary time for information. Hence, among the preſent inhabitants of the globe, we have but imperfect ſketches of what is peculiar to the one ſex, and what to the other.

Both ſexes equally ſubject to the power of cuſtom.

It has been obſerved by all who have attentively conſidered human nature, that faſhion and cuſtom are powers which exerciſe the moſt extenſive authority over weak and little minds, either becauſe ſuch are not properly qualified to examine the cauſes from which they ariſe, nor the effects of which they are productive; or becauſe, after having examined and found them ridiculous, they have not fortitude enough to prefer ſingularity to cuſtom, though the former be founded on reaſon, and the latter on folly or caprice: and as women in all ages have been ſuppoſed to be more the ſlaves of faſhion, ceremony, and cuſtom, than men, this ſlavery has conſtantly been made uſe of to prove the weakneſs and inferiority of their underſtandings. We allow, indeed, that if the fact were eſtabliſhed, the proof would be undeniable: but we think it is far from being eſtabliſhed; for we challenge any man of ſenſe and impartiality to look around him into the faſhions and cuſtoms of

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Europe, and to ſay whether thoſe of our ſex are not as whimſical and ridiculous as thoſe of the other, and whether our whole deportment does not declare, that we are as inviolably attached to them.

As the ſubject of female ceremonies and cuſtoms is of the moſt delicate nature, and requires to be touched by the ſofteſt pencil, it may on that account have been the more generally paſſed over in ſilence; and on that account, alſo, we find ourſelves obliged to run over it more ſlightly than is conſiſtent with the nature of hiſtorical information. But we lay it down as a rule, that we would rather ſtop ſomething ſhort of the information we could give, than offend the moſt delicate ear. As the ſubject of ceremonies and cuſtoms is ſo intimately connected with ſeveral of thoſe of which we have already treated, and ſhall hereafter have occaſion to treat in the courſe of this work, we ſhall here only mention a few of thoſe which appear the moſt remarkable, and which are either altogether, or for the moſt part, practiſed only by women.

Bewailing of virginity.

One of the earlieſt ceremonies peculiar to the ſex, which we meet with in hiſtory, is the bewailing of virginity. This was practiſed among the Iſraelites, Phœnicians, and ſeveral of the neighbouring nations, by all women who were obliged to relinquiſh life before they had entered into the ſtate of wedlock; or who, by any particular vow being devoted to perpetual celibacy, were, in conſequence of that vow, cut off from all hopes of enjoying the ſweets of love, or of raiſing up poſterity. Theſe laſt not only continued through life, at ſtated times, to deplore the unhappineſs of their own fate, but, on ſome occaſions, aſſembled their female friends and relations, to aſſiſt them in performing the mournful

mournful ceremony. It is ſuppoſed, that the reaſon why the Iſraelitiſh virgins bewailed their virginity, was, becauſe every woman flattered herſelf with the hope of being mother to the Meſſiah that was to come: but among the neighbouring nations, the cuſtom muſt have originated from other cauſes; but what theſe were, it is impoſſible for us now to diſcover: we can only conjecture, that as a numerous poſterity was reckoned, among the ancients, one of the greateſt bleſſings, and a particular mark of the divine favour, that ſhe who was excluded from a poſſibility of this bleſſing, and of this diſtinguiſhing favour, might on theſe accounts ſuppoſe herſelf peculiarly wretched.

Ceremony of mourning for the death of Adonis.

BESIDES this ceremony of bewailing virginity, there is another, perhaps not leſs ancient, which was likewiſe practiſed by the women of Iſrael, of Phœnicia, and alſo by thoſe of Greece and of ſome other nations: this was the annual lamentation for the death of Adonis, or, as the ſcripture calls him, Thammuz, performed by the Phœnician women, on the banks of the river Adonis, and by thoſe of other nations, in their cities and houſes: but before we proceed to deſcribe this ceremony, we think it neceſſary to give ſome account of its origin.

ADONIS, according to ſome of the ancients, was a moſt beautiful boy; Venus on this account admired him ſo much from his earlieſt infancy, that ſhe wiſhed to have him educated according to her own mind, and therefore committed the care of him to Proſerpine. When he was grown up to a man, Venus demanded him as her right, but Proſerpine, who by this time had alſo become fond of him, refuſed the demand; upon which a violent diſpute aroſe between the two goddeſſes, which, after long altercation,

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cation, was at last referred to the decision of Jupiter. On hearing both parties, Jupiter decreed, that he should spend one-third of every year with Proserpine, another with Venus, and during the remaining third, should dispose of himself according to his own inclination. Adonis, having spent his portion of the year with Proserpine, went to Venus, and being greatly captivated with her charms, she had the address to detain him the whole remaining part of it; upon which Diana, who was also desperately in love with him, and had flattered herself that he would come and live with her that third part of the year in which he was at liberty, being highly affronted at the preference he had given to Venus, in the first transport of her resentment, sent a wild boar to destroy him.

According to others, Adonis being an incestuous child, begot by Cynarus king of Cyprus on his own daughter, was on that account exposed on the mountains, and nourished by the nymphs, where Venus accidentally seeing him, fell so much in love with him, that Mars, jealous of the growing connection, transformed himself into a wild boar and slew him. Others again say, that while he was hunting in the Idalian grove, a boar which he was pursuing, turned upon him, and tore him to pieces; that Venus, commiserating his fate, transformed him into a flower of a bloody colour, and called it by his name; or that being unspeakably grieved for the loss of her paramour, and resolving that she would not tamely relinquish her hopes, she followed him to the shades below, and, demanding him of Proserpine, at length so far succeeded, as to prevail on her infernal majesty to allow him to return and spend one half of every year with her upon earth; which having accomplished, she joyfully ascended from the shades, and relating her

ſucceſs to her companions, inſtituted a feſtival in memory of having brought back from the regions of the dead, the ſwain whom ſhe adored.

SUCH are the ſtories related of Adonis, and ſuch is ſaid to have been the inſtitution of the ceremonies with which he was honoured. But though the occaſion of this inſtitution, as well as every other thing that has been handed down to us concerning him, bears the moſt indubitable marks of fable; yet that there was ſuch a perſon as Adonis, and that ceremonies were performed by the women of ſeveral nations, to commemorate his untimely death, and extraordinary reſtitution to life, the ſacred and profane hiſtory of antiquity have equally contributed to confirm.

THE Phœnician women performed the ceremonies ſacred to Adonis in the following manner. Through their country runs the river of Adonis, the channel of which is, for many miles towards its ſource, a kind of red earth; this earth tinges its waters of a bloody colour, as often as it is waſhed down from its banks and the adjacent country by the rain. Superſtition, inſtead of attributing this to the natural cauſe, ſuppoſed that the waters were at theſe times tinged with the blood of Adonis, or rather that they put on that bloody appearance, to expreſs their ſorrow for the tragical exit he made upon their banks. This appearance was therefore reckoned a ſignal by the gods, appointing the proper time for the celebration of the rites inſtituted to call to remembrance that exit. Accordingly the women, at this ſignal, aſſembled on the banks of the river, and began their lamentations, which were of the loudeſt and moſt lugubrious nature, and ſuch as they commonly uttered upon the loſs of their moſt near and dear relations.

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tions. The lamentations ended, they diſciplined themſelves with whips, then offered a ſacrifice, and on the day following, pretending that Adonis was revived, and had aſcended through the air to the upper regions, they ſhouted for joy, ſhaved their heads, and obliged all who would not comply with this cuſtom to proſtitute themſelves in the temple of Venus, as a recompence to that goddeſs, for having neglected a part of the ceremony ſacred to the memory of her beloved paramour.

THE women of Byblus alſo performed the firſt part of this ceremony with mourning and lamentation, during which the prieſts of Oſiris in Egypt wrote to them that they had found the god whom they were ſeeking, ſent the letter in a ſmall ark made of papyrus, which is ſaid to have gone by ſea of its own accord, and performed its voyage in ſeven days. As ſoon as it arrived in the port, the women who were met together to mourn and to lament, changed the ſcene to dancing, feaſting, and rejoicing, becauſe he was found alive whom they had mourned as being dead.

THE Iſraelitiſh women alſo celebrated theſe rites; for Ezekiel tells us, that on being brought to the door of the Lord's houſe, he ſaw their women weeping for Thammuz. They are ſuppoſed to have obſerved them in the following manner. They laid an image of Adonis on a bed, and having for ſome time lamented over it, a light was brought in by the prieſt, who anointed the mouths of the mourners, and whiſpered to them that ſalvation was come, that deliverance was brought to paſs; upon which the image was taken as from a ſepulchre, and they rejoiced at its reſtitution to life, with a joy no leſs extravagant than their ſorrow had been on account of its death.

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THESE myſteries were alſo celebrated by the Greeks, in the following manner: All their cities put themſelves into mourning, coffins were expoſed at every door, the ſtatues of Venus and Adonis were carried in proceſſion, with all the pomp and ceremony practiſed at funerals, the women tore their hair, beat their breaſts, and counterfeited all the actions and geſtures uſual in lamenting the dead. Along with the proceſſion were carried ſhells filled with earth, in which were raiſed ſeveral ſorts of herbs, eſpecially lettuces, in memory of Adonis being laid out by Venus upon a bed of lettuces. After this a ſacrifice was offered, and the following day ſpent in expreſſing their joy, that Proſerpine, at the ſolicitation of Venus, had conſented to allow Adonis to return from the ſhades to the regions above.

CEREMONIES and cuſtoms, even though they are of a religious nature, like all other things, are frequently obliterated by devouring time; ſuch, however, is not the fate of that we have been now deſcribing. It is ſaid that it ſtill exiſts in ſome places of the Levant, with little variation from the manner in which it was practiſed by the ancient Greeks.

Good goddeſs worſhipped only by women.

DEITIES, whether they were ſuppoſed to be of the maſculine or feminine gender, were generally worſhipped indiſcriminately by both ſexes; but to this rule there were ſome few exceptions. Among the Syrians there was a female deity called the great Syrian goddeſs, who ſeems chiefly to have been worſhipped by prieſts, who had emaſculated themſelves, to render them fit for her ſervice, and by frantic women. In ſpite of every pretenſion to the contrary, we muſt all be ſometimes ſenſible of a natural partiality to that ſex to which we belong, and feel ourſelves prone

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to excuſe its faults and pity its infirmities, as incidents to which we ourſelves are more liable. Among people therefore, who ſuppoſe that their deities, like themſelves, are of different ſexes, it will be impoſſible not to ſuppoſe them alſo ſuſceptible of the different propenſities and feelings of thoſe ſexes: hence nothing could be more natural than for women to addreſs themſelves to, and imagine they would be more readily heard by, a female deity than a male; and hence aroſe among that ſex, the peculiar worſhip and adoration they paid to ſome of the goddeſſes. Juno, otherwiſe called Lucina, who had herſelf felt the pains of child-bearing, and was on that account ſuppoſed to be more ſuſceptible of feeling for thoſe in a like condition, was conſtituted the patroneſs of lying-in women, and by them conſtantly invoked to procure a ſafe and eaſy delivery. Veſta, becauſe ſhe had always retained her virginity, was on that account ſuppoſed to be a proper patroneſs for chaſtity, and therefore worſhipped in a temple at Rome, and in ſome other countries by virgins only. But of all the kinds of adoration paid by women to a female deity, that of the Roman ladies to the good goddeſs, ſeems the moſt unaccountable and extraordinary, as it originated, ſo far as we know, from no particular cauſe, and tended to no particular purpoſe, as it was conducted with the utmoſt ſecrecy, and ſcrupulouſly concealed from the eyes of every thing of the maſculine gender.

As early as the birth of the Roman republic, it had been cuſtomary for the women, at the expiration of every conſular year, to celebrate, in the houſe of the conſul or prætor, certain religious rites and ceremonies in honour of the good goddeſs; but what theſe ceremonies were, or how conducted, we can give no account, as no man was ever allowed to be preſent at them, and no man

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man was ever made acquainted with their nature and tendency. All we can ſay is, that when the time appointed for celebrating theſe rites came, the Veſtal virgins repaired to the houſe appointed for that purpoſe, and offered ſacrifices to the good goddeſs; but the ſacrifices offered, and the manner of offering them, were ſecrets which to this day remain impenetrable, and ſtrongly contradict the common opinion, that no ſecret is ſafe in the breaſt of a woman.

Our own times furniſh us with an inſtance of a ceremony from which all women are carefully excluded *; but the Roman ladies, in performing the rites ſacred to the good goddeſs, were even more afraid of the men than our maſons are of women; for we are told by ſome authors, that ſo cautious were they of concealment, that even the ſtatues and pictures of men and other male animals were hoodwinked with a thick veil. The houſe of the conſul, though commonly ſo large that they might have been perfectly ſecured againſt all intruſion in ſome remote apartment of it, was obliged to be evacuated by all male animals, and even the conſul himſelf was not ſuffered to remain in it. Before they began their ceremonies, every corner and lurking-place in the houſe was carefully ſearched, and no caution omitted to prevent all poſſibility of being diſcovered by impertinent curioſity, or diſturbed by preſumptive intruſion. But theſe cautions were not all the guard that was placed around them; the laws of the Romans made it death for any man to be preſent at the ſolemnity.

* Maſonry.

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The worſhippers intruded upon by Clodius.

SUCH being the precautions, and ſuch the penalties for inſuring the ſecrecy of this ceremony, it was only once attempted to be violated, though it exiſted from the foundation of the Roman empire till the introduction of Chriſtianity; and this attempt was made, not ſo much perhaps with a view to be preſent at the ceremony, as to fulfil an aſſignation with a miſtreſs. Pompeia, the wife of Cæſar, having been ſuſpected of a criminal correſpondence with Clodius, and ſo cloſely watched that ſhe could find no opportunity of gratifying her paſſion, at laſt, by the means of a female ſlave, ſettled an aſſignation with him at the celebration of the rites of the good goddeſs. Clodius was directed to come in the habit of a ſinging-girl, a character he could eaſily perſonate, being young and of a fair complexion. As ſoon as the ſlave ſaw him enter, ſhe ran to inform her miſtreſs. The miſtreſs, eager to meet her lover, immediately left the company, and threw herſelf into his arms, but could not be prevailed upon by him to return ſo ſoon as he thought neceſſary for their mutual ſafety; upon which he left her, and began to take a walk through the rooms, always avoiding the light as much as poſſible. While he was thus walking by himſelf, a maid-ſervant accoſted him, and deſired him to ſing; he took no notice of her, but ſhe followed and urged him ſo cloſely, that at laſt he was obliged to ſpeak. His voice immediately betrayed his ſex; the maid-ſervant ſhrieked, and running into the room where the rites were performing, told that a man was in the houſe. The women, in the utmoſt conſternation, threw a veil over the myſteries, ordered the doors to be ſecured, and with lights in their hands, ran about the houſe ſearching for the ſacrilegious intruder. They found him in the apartment of the ſlave who had admitted him,

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drove him out with ignominy, and, though it was the middle of the night, immediately diſperſed, to give an account to their huſbands of what had happened. Clodius was ſoon after accuſed of having profaned the holy rites; but the populace declaring in his favour, the judges, fearing an inſurrection, were obliged to acquit him.

In a country where the women were leſs regarded than at Rome, and where leſs confidence was repoſed in their probity and honour, the men would probably have ſuppoſed, that ceremonies ſo carefully concealed from their knowledge were either inimical to virtue, or to the ſtate. But that no ſuch ſuſpicions were entertained by the Romans, we learn from Cicero, who, ſpeaking of theſe myſteries, ſays, "What ſacrifice is there ſo ancient, as that which "has been handed down to us from our firſt kings, and is coeval "with Rome herſelf? What ſacrifice is there ſo private and ſecret, "as that which is concealed, not only from the eyes of the curious "and inquiſitive, but from the ſight of all men, and where neither "the moſt profligate wickedneſs nor impudence ever yet preſumed "to enter? This ſacrifice no man except Clodius was ever ſo im-"pious as to violate; no man but Clodius ever thought, without "the utmoſt horror, of aſſiſting at it. This ſacrifice, which is "performed by the Veſtal virgins, which is performed for the "proſperity of the Roman people, which is performed in the "houſe of the chief magiſtrate, celebrated with unknown cere-"monies, and in honour of a goddeſs, whoſe very name to know "is ſacrilege; this ſacrifice Clodius prophaned."

In ſubſequent periods, it has been alleged by ſome, that whatever opinion the Romans themſelves entertained of the rites and ceremonies

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monies performed in honour of this good goddeſs, they muſt have been at leaſt of an indelicate nature; elſe why all this care and ſolicitude of the women to conceal them from the men? But we think it is more natural, as well as charitable, to ſuppoſe, that as the Romans had a deity to preſide almoſt over every particular circumſtance and action, this good goddeſs muſt either have been conſidered as the patroneſs of the ſex in general, or the particular patroneſs of ſome of their affairs and concerns; and that on this account the women imagined nothing could be ſo acceptable to her, as rites and ceremonies performed only by that ſex, and for the proſperity of thoſe affairs which ſhe patroniſed.

THIS being probably the caſe, we have the ſtrongeſt reaſon to ſuppoſe, that the worſhip of this goddeſs was not in the leaſt inconſiſtent with decency of manners, or modeſty of character. But this was not the caſe every where; in other countries, there were rites performed by the women incompatible with either; ſuch were thoſe of the women in the temple of Venus, thoſe of the prieſts and prieſteſſes of Cybele. Such were the mad and licentious revelries in honour of Bacchus; ſuch are the frantic geſticulations and howlings of the women of California, while ſacrificing to their idols; and ſuch alſo are the dances of the women of modern Egypt, and of ſome other places which we have already deſcribed.

Ceremonies of the Jewiſh women.

IN the religion of the modern Jews, there are ſome ceremonies peculiar to their women, at the commencement of their ſabbath, which is on the Friday evening at half an hour before the ſun ſets. Every conſcientious Jew muſt have a lamp lighted in his

houſe, even though he ſhould borrow the oil of his neighbour. The lighting of theſe lamps is a kind of religious rite, invariably aſſigned to the women, in order to recal to their memory the crime by which their original mother firſt extinguiſhed the lamp of righteouſneſs, and to teach them, that they ought to do every thing in their power to atone for that crime, by rekindling it. Inſtead of the ſcape-goat, which this people formerly loaded with their ſins, and ſent into the wilderneſs, they now ſubſtitute a fowl. Every father of a family takes a white cock, and the mother of the family a white hen, which ſhe ſtrikes upon the head, repeating at every ſtroke, "Let this hen atone for my ſins; ſhe ſhall die, "but I ſhall live." This done, ſhe twiſts her neck, and cuts her throat, to ſignify, that without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion of ſin. If a woman, however, happens to be pregnant at the time of this ceremony, as ſhe cannot aſcertain whether the infant is a male or a female, that its ſins, of whatever gender it be, may not be unexpiated, ſhe takes both a hen and a cock, that ſhe may be aſſured of having performed the ceremony as required by their law.

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In the religions of the preſent times, and particularly that of chriſtianity, which teaches us, that the Supreme Being is the common and impartial father and governor of both ſexes, there are but few ceremonies peculiar either to the men or to the women; we ſhall therefore only take notice of one more, which is practiſed by the women of Chineſe Tartary, aſſiſted by their Bonzes, or prieſts, who turn the credulity of the ſex to their own emolument. In many places of this country, there are aſſemblies of women, who, to the number of ten or fifteen, meet together at ſtated times, and out of this number annually elect a directreſs of their ſociety.

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An aged Bonze preſides at the meeting, and ſings anthems in praiſe of the god Fo. On their more ſolemn days, they adorn the houſe where they meet with many images and groteſque paintings, repreſenting the miſeries and torments of the damned. Theſe meetings continue for ſeven days, during which they employ themſelves in laying up treaſure for the world to come: this conſiſts of a little paper houſe, which having painted and gilded, they fill with a great number of paper boxes varniſhed and painted; in theſe they depoſit pieces of paper formed into the ſhape of ingots, and done over with gold or ſilver leaf; of which ſeveral hundreds are ſuppoſed neceſſary to redeem the ſoul from the cruelties and tortures which Gen-vang, the king of hell, inflicts on thoſe who have nothing to bribe him into lenity. The reſt, as well as the houſe which contains them, are deſigned to procure the ſoul a comfortable lodging, with ſuch victuals and drink as are neceſſary in the other world.

EVERY thing thus prepared, to the doors of theſe paper houſes the women faſten paper padlocks, and lock them with paper keys; and when the lady who was at the expence of building that deſtined for herſelf dies, the ſurvivors meet, and with great ſolemnity burn the whole; imagining in the next world ſhe ſhall find, that from its aſhes her houſe has ariſen with every thing in it for her uſe; only the paper ingots, inſtead of remaining what they were, turned into gold or ſilver, according to the metal with which they were gilded.

Ceremonies in mourning peculiar to women.

WHEREVER politeneſs has ſtamped a real value upon beauty of features and elegance of perſon, there is hardly any circumſtance powerful enough to induce the fair ſex to injure, or even for a time

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time to ſubmit to have the luſtre of either the one or the other eclipſed: but where theſe natural advantages ſcarcely entitle the poſſeſſor to any ſuperior attention or regard, they are of conſequence cultivated with leſs aſſiduity, and preſerved with leſs ſolicitude. Women, in the politer countries of Europe, even when obliged to dreſs themſelves in the weeds of ſorrow and affliction, never loſe ſight of the idea of appearing lovely, and uſually contrive matters ſo, as that even their weeds may add ſomething to their charms, by giving them a languiſhing and melancholy air; circumſtances which often render beauty more irreſiſtible, than when it is arrayed in all the tinſel glare of ſhow, and frippery of faſhion. The women in the ruder ages of antiquity, and thoſe of many modern nations, into whoſe plan of life elegance and politeneſs have not yet entered, in the melancholy moments dedicated to mourning, regardleſs of every thing but the cuſtom of their country, or rather, perhaps, of the impulſes of their heart, not only eclipſe the preſent luſtre of their charms, but, by the wounds and flaſhes which they make upon their bodies, cruelly deface them for ever.

Origin of women wounding themſelves in mourning.

It was throughout all antiquity a prevailing opinion, that no offended deity would grant forgiveneſs without blood; hence almoſt every people upon earth ſtained the altars of their gods with the blood of human or of more ignoble victims. But blood was not only neceſſary to appeaſe a god when offended, it was alſo the moſt effectual means of rendering him propitious, and procuring from him any favour; and hence, almoſt in every nation, thoſe who approached a deity to aſk any particular favour of him, mangled and tore their own fleſh, as the ſureſt method of obtaining their requeſt. Nor was it their deities alone, which the an-

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cients ſuppoſed were delighted with blood; the ghoſts, alſo, of their deceaſed relations approaching in their ſeparate ſtate nearer to the nature of theſe deities, likewiſe reſembled them in this particular. It is therefore not improbable, that the cuſtom of wounding and tearing the fleſh in mourning, was firſt introduced to appeaſe the ghoſts of deceaſed friends; to ſupplicate them for ſome particular favour; to ſhew them how much they were loved and lamented by thoſe whom they had left behind them on earth; or to feaſt them with human blood, upon which they were ſuppoſed by the Greeks and ſome of the neighbouring nations to regale themſelves with a peculiar pleaſure. But from whatever cauſe this cuſtom proceeded, we are well aſſured that the women of Egypt, Syria, Phœnicia, Greece, and perhaps of many other nations, mangled and disfigured themſelves by wounds, on the death of their friends and relations.

BUT this cuſtom was not peculiar to antiquity; it has been handed down even to our times. In Otaheite, and in ſeveral of the other iſlands around it, the women, either in compliance with the cuſtom of their country, or rather, perhaps, when the idea of ſome departed friend ſtole into their memory, though in the height of a fit of jollity and mirth, immediately aſſumed the appearance of the deepeſt ſorrow, wounded their heads with the tooth of a ſhark, till the blood ran down their faces; and as ſoon as the ceremony was ended, or perhaps the idea of the departed friend drove out by another of a more pleaſureable nature, the tranſition from ſorrow to joy was as inſtantaneous as it had before been from joy to ſorrow.

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THIS ceremony, however, of our modern ſavages, although cruel in its nature, and unavailing in its conſequences, is only of a ſhort duration, and gives but little interruption to the more cheerful ſenſations. But the mourning of the Grecian women was long, and, while it laſted, ſtruck out of exiſtence every thing that could be called joyous or amuſing. They not only beat their breaſts, and tore their faces with their nails, but alſo diveſted themſelves of all their ornaments, laid aſide their jewels, their gold, and whatever was rich and precious in apparel, ſequeſtered themſelves from company, and refuſed all the comforts and conveniencies of life, ſhunned the light as odious, and courted dark ſhades and melancholy retirement: they alſo tore or cut off their hair, and either caſt it into the funeral pile, to be conſumed along with the body of the perſon for whom they mourned, or into the tomb, to be buried along with it. Cutting off the hair was not, however, an invariable cuſtom. Some ran about with it diſhevelled, clothing themſelves in the coarſeſt garments, throwing duſt upon their heads and faces, and even ſometimes proſtrating themſelves upon the earth, and rolling in the duſt; cuſtoms which ſeem to have been practiſed from the earlieſt antiquity, as expreſſive of the deepeſt ſorrow and affliction.

BESIDES the ceremonies already mentioned, the women in ancient times, as directed by fancy or inſtigated by regard, decked the tombs of their deceaſed friends; they hung lamps upon them, and adorned them with a variety of herbs and flowers; a cuſtom at this time obſerved by the inhabitants of Conſtantinople and its neighbourhood, who not only adorn the tombs of their dead, but plant their burying-grounds with roſemary, cypreſs, and other odoriferous ſhrubs and flowers; but whether with a view to pleaſe the

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manes of the dead, or preſerve the health of the living, is uncertain. There were other ornaments beſides theſe we have now mentioned, uſed by the women of antiquity to deck the tombs. Among the Greeks, the tomb of a deceaſed lover was frequently hung round with locks of the hair of his miſtreſs. They likewiſe made offerings, and poured out libations to the ghoſts, whom they ſuppoſed to ſmell, to eat, and to drink as they did while upon earth. This was not only a prevailing opinion among the ancients, but has not as yet been totally obliterated. It is ſtill believed by the Chiriguanes; and at Narva, one of the principal towns of Livonia, they celebrate a remarkable feſtival ſacred to the manes of the dead. On the eve of Whitſuntide, the women aſſemble in the church-yard, and ſpreading napkins on the graves and tombſtones, cover them with a variety of diſhes of broiled and fried fiſh, cuſtards, and painted eggs; and to render them more agreeable to the ghoſts, the prieſt, while he is praying over them, perfumes them with frankincenſe, the women all the time howling and lamenting in the moſt diſmal manner, and the intelligent clerk not leſs aſſiduouſly employed in defrauding the ghoſts, by gathering up all the viands for the uſe of the prieſt.

Inſtances of rejoicing for the dead.

THERE are few, if any cuſtoms that have been more generally diffuſed among mankind, than that of mourning for the dead; and there are few nations where the women have not, either from cuſtom or the tenderneſs of their nature, acted a principal part in theſe mournings. There are, however, ſome nations, who, inſtead of reckoning death a ſubject of lamentation, rejoice at it, as a happy deliverance from pain and adverſity; and others, who, though they commonly mourn at the death of their friends and relations, rejoice at it when attended with particular circumſtances.

Thus

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Thus the Greek and Roman fathers, and, what is more extraordinary, even the mothers, rejoiced when their ſons fell in the defence of their country; and thus the Chriſtians, in ſeveral periods and countries, rejoiced when their friends, being put to death by perſecutors, were numbered among thoſe who were reckoned worthy of the crown of martyrdom. Thus alſo the women of modern Egypt, though on other occaſions they lament over the dead with the moſt diſmal outcries, when a Sheick departs this life, demonſtrate the moſt extravagant joy and ſatisfaction, becauſe, ſay they, a Sheick muſt, at death, infallibly enter into the paradiſe of the bleſſed.

Sexual ceremonies of women.

BESIDES theſe ceremonies of religion and of mourning which the women have appropriated to themſelves, there are others obſerved by them, which, ariſing from their nature, and the circumſtances attending it, may, for that reaſon, be denominated ſexual. In Chirigua, when a girl arrives at a certain age, her female relations incloſe her in a hammoc, and ſuſpend it at the end of her cottage. Having remained in this hammoc for one month, they let it down half way, and at the end of another month, the neighbouring women aſſemble, and having armed themſelves with clubs and ſtaves, enter the cottage in a frantic manner, ſtriking furiouſly upon every thing within it. Having acted this farce for ſome time, one of them declares that ſhe has killed the ſerpent which had ſtung the girl, upon which ſhe is liberated from her confinement, the women rejoice for ſome time together, and then depart every one to her own home. Among ſome of the Tartarian tribes, when a girl arrives at the ſame period of life, they ſhut her up for ſome days, and afterward hang a ſignal on the top of her tent, to let the young men know that ſhe is become mar-

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riageable. Among others of theſe tribes the parents of the girl make a feaſt on this occaſion, and having invited their neighbours, and treated them with milk and horſe fleſh, they declare that their daughter is become marriageable, and that they are ready to diſpoſe of her as ſoon as a proper opportunity ſhall offer. In Circaſſia and Georgia, where parents are ſometimes obliged to marry their daughters while infants, to prevent their being violently taken from them by the rich and powerful, the circumſtance of a girl being arrived at the time of puberty, is frequently concealed for ſome time, as the huſband has then a right to demand her, and the parents perhaps think her too young for the matrimonial ſtate.

AMONG the circumſtances which give riſe to theſe cuſtoms which we have called ſexual, child-bearing is one of the moſt particular. As in child-bearing ſome little aſſiſtance has generally been neceſſary in almoſt all countries; to afford this aſſiſtance, the women have commonly employed midwives of their own ſex. The Athenians were the only people of antiquity who did otherwiſe. They had a law which prohibited women and ſlaves from practiſing phyſic: as midwifery was accounted one of the branches of this art, many lives had been loſt, becauſe the delicacy of the women would not ſubmit to be delivered by a man. A woman called Agnodice, in order to reſcue her countrywomen from this difficulty, dreſſed herſelf in the habit of a man, and having ſtudied the art of phyſic, revealed herſelf to the women, who all agreed to employ no other. Upon this the reſt of the phyſicians, enraged that ſhe ſhould monopolize all the buſineſs, arraigned her before the court of Areopagus, as having only obtained the preference to them by corrupting the

chaſtity

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chaſtity of the wives whom ſhe delivered. This obliging her to diſcover her ſex, the phyſicians then proſecuted her for violating the laws of her country. The principal matrons of the city, now finding her in ſuch danger, aſſembled together, came into the court, and petitioned the judges in her favour. The petition of the matrons was ſo powerful, and the reaſons which they urged for having employed her, ſo conducive to the preſervation of female delicacy, that a law was made, allowing women to practiſe midwifery. The ſex availed themſelves of this law, and the aſſiſtance of the men ſoon became quite unfaſhionable.

AMONG the Romans, and the Arabians, who after them cultivated the ſcience of medicine with great aſſiduity, the women, in caſes of difficulty, ſometimes ſubmitted to be delivered by a man; but this was far from being a matter of choice or a general practice: nor was it till the latter end of the laſt century, and beginning of this, when exceſs of politeneſs in France and Italy had begun to eradicate delicacy, that the ſex began to give ſo much into the mode of being delivered by male practitioners; a mode which now ſo commonly prevails, that there is ſcarcely to be found in Europe, a woman ſo unfaſhionable as to be delivered by one of her own ſex, if ſhe can afford to pay for the aſſiſtance of a man.—How far the women may be ſafer in this faſhionable way than in the other, we ſhall not take upon us to determine, but of this we are aſſured, that the cuſtom is leſs conſiſtent with delicacy.

IN ages unenlightened by ſcience and philoſophy, in moments ſo perilous to the ſex as thoſe of child-bearing, we are not ſurpriſed to find them uſing ſeveral ridiculous and unavailing me-

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thods to ſecure themſelves from danger; but our aſtoniſhment is excited when we find that, in our own times, they are ſtill the dupes of others not leſs inconſiſtent with reaſon and experience.

The Greek and Roman women imagined that the palm-tree poſſeſſed a power of eaſing pain and facilitating labour; they therefore at theſe times graſped palm branches in their hands, and devoutly ſupplicated the goddeſs Lucina. The ancient Germans, deſtitute of more rational methods, placed all their hopes in magical girdles, which they tied about their women, and which, according to them, had the virtues of procuring immediate eaſe, and promoting a ſpeedy delivery. But the power of theſe girdles did not terminate here, it extended even to the child as well as to the mother; and a ſon, born by their aſſiſtance, was undoubtedly to be brave, and a daughter to be chaſte; hence ſuch girdles were carefully kept in the repoſitories of kings and of other great perſonages. Till within theſe few years, ſome of them were to be met with in the families of the chieftains in Scotland. They were marked with many myſtical figures, and the ceremony of binding them about the women in labour, attended with certain myſtical words and geſtures, which only ſome particular women were ſuppoſed to underſtand; a circumſtance by which it appeared that their pretended utility depended more upon magic, than on their intrinſic virtues. Every age and country has its peculiar follies and abſurdities; ours has many noſtrums to prevent the pain neceſſarily attendant on child-bearing, and they are juſt as well calculated to perform an impoſſibility, as the methods we have been now deſcribing.

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In ſome climates, where the conſtitution is relaxed by the heat, and at the ſame time not vitiated by theſe habits which in politer nations deſtroy mankind, women are ſaid to be delivered with but little pain, and frequently without any aſſiſtance; nor is this ſingularity altogether peculiar to warm countries, but ſeems to depend more on living agreeably to nature, than on climate, or any other circumſtance; for we have heard it aſſerted by ſeveral people who have been in Canada, that a ſavage woman, when ſhe feels the ſymptoms of labour coming upon her, ſteals ſilently to the woods, lays herſelf down in a coppice, and is delivered alone; which done, ſhe goes to the neareſt river or pool, waſhes herſelf and the child, and then returns home to her hut.

While ignorance and ſuperſtition diſturbed the human mind with groundleſs terrors and apprehenſions, it was a prevailing opinion over all Europe, that lying-in women were more ſubject to the power of dæmons and witches than people in any other condition, and that new-born infants, if not carefully watched and ſecured by ceremonies and ſpells, were frequently carried away by them: on this account various ceremonies and ſpells were commonly made uſe of; and even ſo lately as our times, we remember to have ſeen in the weſt of Scotland, a horſe-ſhoe nailed upon the door, in an inverted manner, to ſecure a lying-in woman from the power of witchcraft. But this opinion was not confined to Europe; it pervaded at leaſt half the globe. The Nogais Tartars are the particular dupes of it; when one of their women is in labour, the relations of the family aſſemble at her door, and make a prodigious noiſe by beating on pots and kettles, in order to fright away the devil, who, they ſuppoſe,

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would, if he did not find them on their guard, do ſome miſchief to the mother or child, or to both.

Ceremonies and cuſtoms ariſing from marriage.

But the time of lying-in is not the only period of human life in which evil ſpirits are ſuppoſed to have a more than ordinary power; they are imagined by many nations to have the ſame at the time of marriage. The Livonians make the ſign of the croſs with a naked ſword upon the door of the bridegroom's houſe, and afterwards ſtick it in a beam over his head, as a charm to prevent the power of malignant ſpirits; and the bride on the ſame account, ſcatters red rags along the highways, and upon the graves of unbaptized infants.

In countries where the virtue of the ſex is ſuppoſed to be ſecured by their ſenſe of moral rectitude, married women are under no particular reſtraint in the abſence of their huſbands; but in Hindoſtan, when the huſband is from home, the wife muſt not appear chearful, muſt not eat delicate victuals, nor dreſs herſelf in fine cloaths, nor ſit at the window of her apartment, nor in ſhort do any thing but ſuch as indicates ſorrow and ſubjection. In France and Italy, the caſe is almoſt in every particular the reverſe, and in England the ladies are too faſt following the faſhionable example.

In Poland the women of middling condition are not allowed to marry, till they have wrought with their own hands three baſketsful of cloaths, which they are obliged to preſent to the gueſts who attend them on their wedding-day. In Wallachia, the bride wears a veil on the day before, and on that of her

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marriage; whoever unveils her is entitled to a kiſs; but to prevent too much impertinence, the bride may in return demand a preſent, and the requeſt muſt be complied with. The ancient Germans had, and their deſcendants continue to this day, a ceremony called Morgengabe, or morning-gift, which the huſband is obliged to preſent to the bride on the morning after their marriage, and which becomes her ſole and abſolute property, and ſhe may diſpoſe of it in her lifetime or at her death. Some traces of a like cuſtom are to be met with among us, but it is here only voluntary, there it is enforced by a law. Formerly among the peaſants of Britain, when a bride was brought to the door of the bridegroom's houſe, a cake was broken over her head, for the fragments of which the attendants ſcrambled: theſe fragments were laid under the pillows of the young men and maidens, and ſuppoſed to be endowed with a power of making them dream of their future wives and huſbands.

In Adrianople and the neighbouring cities, the women have public baths, which are a part of their religion and of their amuſement, and a bride, the firſt time ſhe appears there after her marriage, is received in a particular manner. The matrons and widows being ſeated round the room, the virgins immediately put themſelves into the original ſtate of Eve. The bride comes to the door richly dreſſed and adorned with jewels; two of the virgins meet her, and ſoon put her in the ſame condition with themſelves; then filling ſome ſilver pots with perfume, they make a proceſſion round the rooms, ſinging an epithalamium, in which all the virgins join in chorus; the proceſſion ended, the bride is led up to every matron, who beſtows on her ſome trifling preſents, and to each ſhe returns thanks, till ſhe has been led round the

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whole. We could add many more ceremonies arifing from marriage, but as they are for the moft part fuch as make a part of the marriage ceremony itfelf, we fhall have occafion to mention them with more propriety afterwards.

Miſcellaneous cuſtoms and ceremonies.

Of all the paſſions which ſubvert reaſon and deform the mind, jealouſy is the moſt credulouſly ridiculous, and in order to clear themſelves from its ſuſpicions, has ſubjected the fair ſex to ſome of the moſt unaccountable expurgatory ceremonies. Such was that of the waters of jealouſy of the ancient Jews, and ſuch alſo was another of a ſimilar nature practiſed by the Greeks, among whom, when a woman was accuſed of unchaſtity, a tablet with the form of an oath, which ſhe was to take, written upon it, was hung about her neck; bearing it in this manner, ſhe went into the water till it reached the calf of her leg, then ſhe ſtood and ſolemnly repeated the oath, which, if falſe, the water, we are told, as if agitated with rage at her perfidy, ſwelled till it roſe over the tablet, that it might cover from the ſun the perpetration of ſo foul a deed; if true, it remained quiet, and the woman was cleared from all ſuſpicion. Might not the ordeal trial, which was uſed for ſo many ages, and for the diſcovery of ſo many crimes, be a relic of this? But be that as it will, it was not founded upon more rational principles.

To trials of this kind the ſingle as well as the married women were ſubject; but of the chaſtity of the latter there were other circumſtances, which the Greeks reckoned the moſt convincing proofs. Pain and difficulty in bringing forth their young, are unavoidable evils, to which the females of all viviparous animals are more or leſs ſubject. But it was ſuppoſed by this people, that

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their gods, in commiſeration of the caſe of a woman who was unjuſtly ſuſpected of infidelity to her huſband, wrought a miracle in her favour, by exempting her from theſe peculiar evils annexed to the lot of female life; and ſhe who brought forth a child without a ſigh or a groan, and declared that ſhe felt no pain, was in conſequence accounted as chaſte as Veſta. Hence it is obvious, that it only required a tolerable degree of fortitude in the wife, and a large ſhare of credulity in the huſband, to adjuſt all matrimonial differences of this kind to the ſatisfaction of both. But this was not the only proof the Greeks had of the conjugal fidelity of their wives: a numerous offspring was among the ancients reckoned one of the greateſt of bleſſings; and to have it increaſed by two children at a birth, was conſidered as one of theſe favours, which the gods only beſtow upon ſuperior virtue and chaſtity. The wife, therefore, who brought forth twins, was by that circumſtance fully cleared of every foul aſperſion. So little, however, is the conſiſtency among mankind, that this very circumſtance, which the Greeks reckoned the ſtrongeſt proof of the chaſtity of their wives, is, by the Hottentots of the preſent time, reckoned the moſt infallible proof of the contrary. We have given the reaſon of the Greeks for their opinion, but that of the Hottentots is rather too indelicate to be related.

On St. Valentine's day, it is cuſtomary, in many parts of Italy, for an unmarried lady to chuſe, from among the young gentlemen of her acquaintance, one to be her guardian or gallant; who, in return for the honour of this appointment, preſents to her ſome noſegays, or other trifles, and thereby obliges himſelf to attend her in the moſt obſequious manner in all her parties of pleaſure, and to all her public amuſements, for the ſpace of one year, when

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he may retire, and the lady may chuſe another in his place. But in the courſe of this connection it frequently happens, that they contract ſuch an inclination to each other, as prompts them to be coupled for life. In the times of chivalry we have ſeen, that the men gloried in protecting the women, and the women thought themſelves ſafe and happy when they obtained that protection. It is probable, therefore, that this cuſtom, though now more an affair of gallantry than of protection, is a relict of chivalry ſtill ſubſiſting among that romantic and ſentimental people.

BUT the obſervation of ſome peculiar cuſtoms on St. Valentine's day is not confined to Italy; almoſt all Europe has joined in diſtinguiſhing it by ſome particular ceremony. As it always happens about that time of the year, when the genial influences of the ſpring begin to operate, it has been believed by the vulgar, that upon it the birds invariably chuſe their mates for the enſuing ſeaſon. In imitation, therefore, of their example, the vulgar of both ſexes, in many parts of Britain, meet together; and having upon ſlips of paper wrote down the names of all their acquaintances, and put them into two different bags, the men draw the female names by lot, and the women the male; the man makes the woman who drew his name ſome trifling preſent, and in the rural gambol becomes her partner; and ſhe conſiders him as her ſweetheart, till he is otherwiſe diſpoſed of, or till next Valentine's day provide her with another.

FROM ſhedding the blood, or taking away the life, of any animal, both ſexes of the Hindoos are ſtrictly prohibited by their religion. Foreigners, in a ſneering manner, frequently take notice, that, in England, gentlemen of property are only allowed by law to butcher

butcher hares, partridges, and pheaſants. Among the Wallachians, though there is no poſitive inſtitution to the contrary, yet the women never deſtroy the life of any creature. Whether this cuſtom was founded by ſome of their ancient legiſlators, or whether it originated from incidental circumſtances, is uncertain; but however that be, nothing can be more ſuitable to the gentleneſs and timidity, which forms the moſt beautiful and engaging part of the female character, and which, if imitated in other countries, might take away ſome of that maſculine ferocity, which diſtinguiſhes many of the lower claſſes of women in Britain, and which they, perhaps, in a great meaſure contract from being conſtituted butchers of all the leſſer animals uſed in our kitchens. How different is this cuſtom of the Wallachian women from that obſerved by ſome of thoſe in America, who aſſiſt in taking away the lives of their aged parents, when they are become of no further uſe to the community; and from that of the Moxes in particular, who, when delivered of twins, are ſaid to bury one of them alive, from an ill-founded opinion, that it is impoſſible for one woman to nurſe two children at the ſame time!

FEASTING upon particular occaſions is of the greateſt antiquity, and, among every rude and uncultivated people, longed for with the utmoſt avidity, as it calls together their friends and acquaintances, whom at other times they have but few opportunities of ſeeing, and gives a ſtimulus to their torpid natures, by the intoxicating liquors then made uſe of. In Egypt, when, upon ſome particular occaſion, a banquet is given, the gueſts are invited by a company of women hired for that purpoſe. The company, commonly about ten or twelve in number, is preceded by ſome eunuchs, and on each ſide guarded by ſeveral Moors with long ſtaffs: in going along, they frequently

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frequently amuſe themſelves and the ſpectators with a ſong adapted to the occaſion, and expreſſive of their ſatisfaction at the approaching feaſt. As the Egyptian women are in general confined, it ſeems probable, that thoſe employed in this manner are like their ſtrolling dancers, under regulations leſs ſevere. But though this confinement is as ſcrupulous as jealouſy can dictate, or eunuchs practiſe, ſuch is the veneration ſhewn to their great prophet Mahomet, that at Cairo even the doors of harams, which are all the reſt of the year watched by eunuchs, and faſtened by bolts and chains, fly open on his birth-day, and allow the joyful priſoners to ſally out, in order to celebrate a feſtival to the founder of their religion, and the deſtroyer of their liberty.

It has generally been obſerved, that thoſe human beings who enjoy the ſmalleſt ſhare of liberty, manage even that ſcanty portion which they have, with the leaſt degree of prudence and diſcretion; becauſe, fond of crowding too many incidents into the duration of their limited freedom, they have neither time to arrange them into any order, nor to reliſh them as they paſs. Such is the caſe with the women of Cairo. On this feſtival, they fly from one amuſement to another, and in the evening, diſguſted with the whole, retire to their harams leſs impatient of their confinement, and with a leſs extravagant idea of the pleaſures of liberty, than they entertained in the morning.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

ERRATA.

Page 3, line 15, for *lawful* read *unlawful.*
163, 23, for *commands* read *command.*
173, 11, for *firſt deſpot of it*, read *their firſt deſpot.*
281, 20, for *are* read *is.*
334, 20, for *their* read *there.*

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